

Experiences of a Literary Man

STEPHEN GWYNN



Lillie Rockford

811



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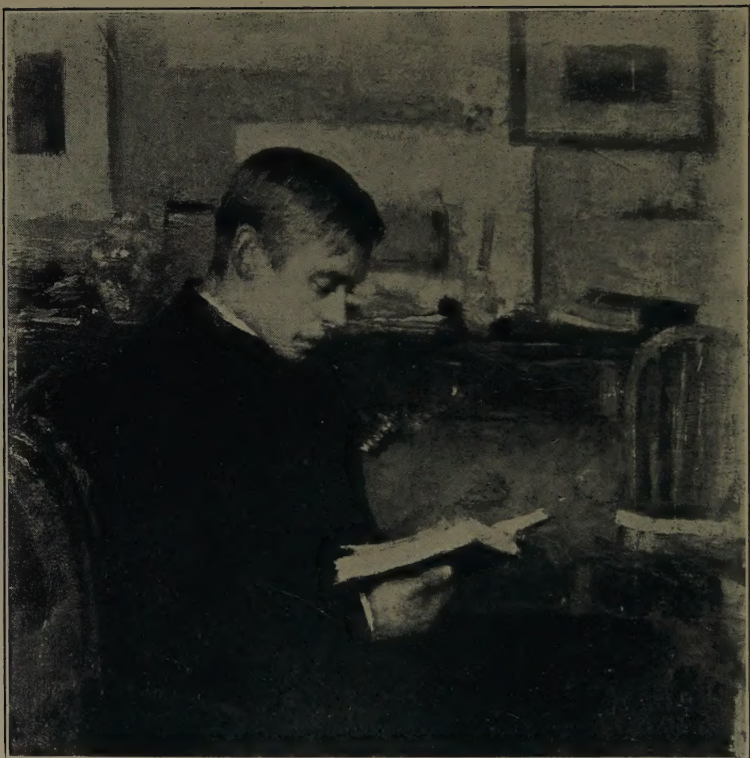
IRISH BOOKS AND IRISH PEOPLE

THE IRISH SITUATION

GARDEN WISDOM

COLLECTED POEMS

EXPERIENCES OF
A LITERARY MAN



T. F. Geoghegan, Dublin.

STEPHEN GWYNN.

From the original by Walter Osborne.

EXPERIENCES OF A LITERARY MAN

BY
STEPHEN GWYNN



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My fullest acknowledgments are offered to the holders of the originals of the illustrations to this book.

The portraits of "A. E." and Shawe Taylor belong to the series with which Sir Hugh Lane endowed his creation, the Dublin Municipal Art Gallery. Osborne's self-portrait hangs in the National Gallery of Ireland. His study of me painted in 1885 is, I think, the first portrait he ever produced. These four have been excellently photographed by Mr. T. F. Geoghegan of Dublin.

Messrs. Elliott & Fry's photograph of Stephen Phillips shows the man after he had begun to coarsen and thicken; but it is like. The wit that always lit up Father Healy's face has perhaps eluded Messrs. Chancellor's art; but I doubt if any camera could have caught it.

I am specially indebted to Messrs. Macmillan for permission to use the admirable likeness of Mary Kingsley.

Another debt I cannot pay as I should, for I do not know the name of the stranger who after my brother Lucius's death sent us this enlargement of a snapshot taken in the College Park at Dublin, which preserves, as only instantaneous photography can do, the memory of a habitual gesture, well known on that and other cricket grounds.

CHAPTER I

FAMILY

I WAS brought up to think myself Irish, without question or qualification ; but the new nationalism prefers to describe me and the like of me as Anglo-Irish. "A.E." has even set me down in print as being the Anglo-Irishman *par excellence*—or, to put it more modestly, the typical Anglo-Irishman. So all my life I have been spiritually hyphenated without knowing it : and since there are a good many like me I shall try and explain how much and how little that means.

First of all, about half of my working life has been spent out of Ireland, and mostly in London, where I now write ; I have always been willingly a Londoner ; I am as much at home in these streets where I never even think of meeting an acquaintance, as in Dublin where one constantly stops or is stopped by the way for a little conversation. Many of my closest ties have been formed over here ; and most of the folk about whom I must write in these Memoirs are known to the English world better than to our Irish people.

Still, if you put me on any Irish mountain with a good stick and a stout pair of boots, or on any Irish lake or river with a rod in my hand, I recognize that I am somehow at home, and myself, as nowhere out of Ireland ; nor do I ever stop to enquire whether my company is Irish or Anglo-Irish. I have been very happy along with Gaelic speakers in Kerry or Donegal or Connemara ; but not one of them seemed to me any more my countryman than a decent

Orangeman who fished with me at Toomebridge on the Bann. On the other hand, I never in my life felt quite so sharply that I was not English as the other day on the Kennet. The water keeper and I had all the hundred things in common that link fishermen into a free-masonry; and yet he was to me a foreigner—far more so, I think, than if he had been French. For, by some odd trick of affinity, I am at home in London and a stranger in England, but a stranger in Paris and almost entirely at my ease in any part of France. Irishmen—and I do not think that here I need distinguish Anglo-Irishmen from the rest—are far less insular than Englishmen; no doubt because they have so much less reason to be convinced that their ways are the only ways, and that every deviation from their way is a defect.

Yet, if I am to examine and anatomize the mixed product which we used, unscientifically, to call an Irishman, I recognize that the more of Gael there is in the blend, the less it is insular. My father was an Ulsterman (he never thought himself the less Irish for that) with about ten generations of schoolmasters and country clergymen behind him since the first of them came over from Wales in the train of a bishop of Derry, and saw the siege and ate half of a pair of leather breeches. (The remnant he is said to have preserved and offered to his domestics when they grumbled at their rations.) I do not think my father would ever have taken so kindly to continental life as did my mother's brothers—O'Briens from County Limerick. The one of them whom I knew best, and liked best, was an architect, and, though he never seriously practised his own art, was a fine though whimsical critic of them all. He spent years tramping about in Switzerland and Italy—where this big red-bearded untidy person was once arrested and put in jail for having more money on him than his appearance warranted.

One of his progenitors, a king of Thomond (that is roughly County Clare and Limerick) survives in history as Conor Slabhair Salaigh—Conor of the spattered coat. That ancient O'Brien resembled my uncle Donough in his

taste for building, and probably in some dash of personal eccentricity. "The king," as my uncle was always known in Limerick, carried his peculiarities to the grave, for by his direction he was carried there in a plain deal coffin drawn by his own horse in his own farmyard cart, to be buried in the Cathedral which an O'Brien founded seven centuries ago.

If anybody in Ireland should have been considered as Irish, it was my mother's people. Almost alone of the old Gaelic dynasties, this family had survived, retaining a good deal of its old prominence—for the simple reason that not only did they decide once and for all to side with the English from the time of Henry VIII, but that the heads of them turned Protestant. Sir Edward O'Brien, my mother's grandfather, who voted against the Union was a Gael, no doubt; but he was a Protestant landlord, part of the "ascendancy." Like many of that class, he found himself short of cash and applied to the ordinary source. Dromoland, the family seat, was in Clare, not far from the town of Ennis, where a certain Mr. Smith did business as an attorney and supplemented it by moneylending. Mr. Smith had a suggestion. He had just acquired the property of Cahirmoyle in County Limerick, and it would be "a nice portion for a younger son." Also, Mr. Smith had daughters, and Sir Edward was a widower. "I may tell you," he said, "Charlotte is my favourite." Sir Edward married Charlotte, and that is why Sir Edward O'Brien's younger son, my grandfather, came to be called after Mr. Smith. And since the days of Brian Boru, from whom the family took its surname, scarcely one of them all has been more widely known than William Smith O'Brien, the rebel leader of 1848—who was presumably an Anglo-Irishman.

I never knew this distinguished relative; he died in 1864, and only saw me in long clothes—the eldest of his many grandchildren. But I have read his diaries, and to my mind there was more of the Englishman about him than came out in any of his children—except perhaps in his

eldest son Edward, who after him owned and rebuilt Cahir-moyle. Yet I think one trait came down from this aristocrat with the big rent-roll who entered Irish politics as Whig member for the family seat, and ended his career in the dock as a felon. None of his family were likely to stop at anything merely because it was extreme and unusual. His second daughter Charlotte had perhaps most of his temper; and she in 1881, after the bad seasons that began in 1879 drove people to emigrate wildly, became convinced that these helpless folk were being fleeced and abused on the passage. She was then a maiden lady close on forty, and almost stone deaf; but she crossed the Atlantic twice in the steerage to see the conditions for herself, she launched a fierce campaign in the press, and then set up a lodging-house at Queenstown—facing single-handed the roughest opposition from all the accredited sharks.

She alone of her father's children took the Nationalist side, and, later on in her life, sympathy with the people made her join the Roman Church. But the most characteristic thing I remember of her is this. Dogs were her chief company—Irish terriers; and she had lost the most beloved of them and could not replace him for long. But at last one day she saw one she liked (she chose always by physiognomy) and tried to make friends with the fierce sharp-faced little bitch: "Scan," she said, "I will call you." But the creature snapped and snarled at her until finally she stretched out her hand and let it meet its teeth in it; and still the hand was stretched out. Scan, stupefied, allowed herself to be petted, handled and carried off, to become the mother of many generations, possessing innumerable accomplishments, but no show points.

Again, it was quite natural that when I became an active Nationalist member of Parliament my uncle Donough, a strong Unionist and authoritarian, should disapprove; but nobody that I ever knew except an O'Brien would have written to the public press, as he did, formally disavowing all relations with me:

But the oddest way in which I saw this "wild trick of our ancestors" break out was when one of my cousins, peacefully married to a Dublin doctor and blessed with a numerous family, turned suffragette. She had never shown the least interest in politics or any other abstract question; but the denial of votes to women who paid taxes struck her as unjust; and since other people sharing her opinion were doing things, she felt that it was her duty to do the like. She consulted her husband, for whose practice it was going to be very bad; he did not share her view, but agreed that, holding it, she would be cowardly not to act; and so, taking a hammer, she went out and tranquilly broke windows, not indiscriminately, but the windows of a Government building. She was put in jail with others: they went on hunger strike: the authorities besought them to eat, and finally offered to let them surreptitiously get away; but that was not in the blood of the O'Briens. Finally, by a special order, they were discharged, and the Urban Council of Tullamore was put in a dilemma. Political prisoners were by custom entitled to a procession and an address of congratulation on their discharge; these were political prisoners. But then, a suffragette had thrown a hatchet at John Redmond, and the Nationalist Party was divided on the issue of votes for women. The Urban Council could not decide; and while they were still deliberating, my cousin went home by train, having made her protest, and took no further interest in any politics.

I do not know that my mother ever formed a political opinion. She was by temperament a moderate—but so, after all, was Smith O'Brien. Yet there was that in her which would have stopped at nothing; and, strangely, my feeling of it links itself with one thing she said. I was reading La Rochefoucauld and she took the volume from me (it had been Smith O'Brien's and has his pencillings).

"*On pardonne tant qu'on aime,*" she read. "As if," she said, "you would not expect most from those you love most and find them the hardest to make excuse for!"

She was a southern, my father a northern ; she the Gael, he the Ulster settler ; yet of the two she was the puritan, and in reality far the more austere. In a sense, we were austere brought up—but never harshly ; and I do not know how children could have had a better time than we who came of that strange marriage.

For a strange marriage it must have seemed. My father went from Portora School at Enniskillen to Trinity, where he won scholarships, and finally the great prize of fellowship—only to be attained after the most exhausting competition. His early college period lay in the forties, when the Young Ireland movement grew. This was at first allied to O'Connell's huge organization, but then split from it, definitely claiming the right of appeal to physical force—a claim which was never since wholly abandoned. Here are three strange links.

My father's father, whom I well remember, saw and remembered one of the lesser fights in the great rising of 1798 ; for, as a child, he was being taken across Strangford Lough when the skirmish broke out at Portaferry. In 1848, rebellion was headed by my other grandfather ; and my father, then a theological student, saw Trinity College filled with armed soldiers. In 1916, the Easter Rising broke out while my father was in College, and he alone of living men remembered to have seen it once before a garrisoned fortress.

Yet probably not even the strange happenings of 1916—when the principles of 1798 and of 1848 were again asserted—would have seemed to my father in 1848 so unlikely, as that he should find himself son-in-law to the rebel, who then lay awaiting trial in Kilmainham Jail.

Here is how it came about. Smith O'Brien's sentence of death was commuted to transportation ; by an act of grace, he was allowed to transfer his property to trustees for his family. The eldest son, my uncle Edward, was one of the first boys sent to St. Columba's College, a school founded by Sewell, who had founded Radley, and later founded Glen-

almond. Its first home was at Stackallen on the Boyne, but soon it was moved to a great house on Kilmashogue Mountain, overlooking Dublin from five hundred feet up. Its fortunes wavered, and in 1856 my father accepted the post of Warden, retaining his rights, but not his pay, as a Fellow of Trinity. Under him, the school prospered, and got special support from the O'Brien clan; there was an O'Brien septimus on the books. Necessarily, the Warden was in communication with Smith O'Brien's family and, later, with my grandfather himself. For after ten years leave was given that the rebel should return to Europe. Family tradition says that when the reunion took place in Brussels his first word was: "What ugly children, and what awful brogues!" He belonged to a generation strongly convinced that the young should be kept in their places; very frugal of praise but lavish of home truths. Later he was allowed to return to Ireland, and after his wife's death, in 1861, the family moved up to Killiney, near Dublin, and there was much coming and going between their household and St. Columba's.

All that I know of my father's wooing is that he proposed to my mother walking on the strand at Killiney, near the wash of the waves; and she, shy and already touched with the family deafness, was doubly uncertain as to what he was trying to convey. But in 1862 she came as a bride to St. Columba's and there in 1864 I was born.

A few months later in that summer, Smith O'Brien died suddenly at Bangor in Wales where he chanced to be staying. What followed is worth telling. He had led the Irish people, or such as would follow him, into ignominious failure; yet there is a quality in the Irish temper that judges success cynically; but when risk has been taken and sacrifice faced, hero-worship is awarded to failure. Moreover in 1864 the Fenian movement, which was deliberately intended to revive the effort that Smith O'Brien and his comrades made, was stirring strongly, and Dublin was its centre. Arrangements had been made to bring the body quietly home to Cahirmoyle

for interment in the churchyard at Rathgonan. But when the boat reached Dublin, shortly after dawn on a summer morning, the quays were crowded, and a party came on board, who at once took charge of the coffin; the family were courteously but firmly ushered to a coach following the hearse—first in a long train of vehicles: and from the North Wall to Kingsbridge this funeral pageant passed through the sleeping city between lines of silent mourners.

It was disconcerting for the O'Briens who, holding the ordinary views of the landlord class, did not welcome this demonstration of devotion to the rebel. Time had indeed made reconciliation; but in 1848 and the years before it, Smith O'Brien's action was particularly distasteful to his elder brother, head of the house, then engaged in establishing his claim to the old barony of Inchiquin.

Neither my father nor my mother ever spoke much of their early days at St. Columba's, and I doubt if either of them cared for that way of life. At all events, before I was out of long clothes, my father accepted one of the big college livings to which Trinity College had the presentation, and away we went to the wilds of Donegal.

We moved as a group. With us went the coachman Robert Coyle and his wife Maria the cook, both of them folk whom my father had fetched from his father's parish at Portstewart. But taking up a rectory meant taking up a farm, and there came also from Portstewart an old ploughman and land-steward with his family, and a yardman with his. That is more than sixty years ago; but such of these folk as still remain in Donegal are still accounted in a sense as strangers; so conservative is the life of the land. And that is just as true of such Protestants as were their neighbours, as of the Catholics.

My life has been spent largely in an effort to understand and interpret Ireland, and that corner of Donegal has been the key to all my study. Everything was there. Ten miles walking would take you where at that time nothing was spoken but Gaelic; but in my father's parish the ordinary

speech was Scots. It was a piece of the Ulster Plantation, just bordering on the unsettled ; and the non-Catholics, who were perhaps forty in the hundred, were subdivided into Protestants (that is, Church of Ireland) and Presbyterians. The Presbyterians were strong middle-class farmers and shopkeepers ; the gentry were without exception of the Irish Church ; and the gentry ruled the country absolutely, with the assistance of the rectors. There was indeed very little difference between the way of life in my father's house and in those of his chief parishioners, for they were all small landlords, each having his home farm, as we had ; and before Disestablishment the glebe tenants paid rent to the rector.

Disestablishment was the first of the big changes which together have made a complete revolution in Ireland during my lifetime. It was the least important, for even before that time clergy had ceased to act as magistrates. Still, it was a big change, and some of the clergy whom I remember from the old order were very unlike their successors—as also their incomes were very different. The best thing to be said for the old order was that it often sent scholars into these remote places. My father's predecessor had also been a Fellow of Trinity ; another of that body held the bordering parish of Kilmacrenan at the gateway into the wilds. But the most characteristic figure of the Establishment was the Bishop, Dr. Alexander, who had undoubtedly owed his appointment to the friendship of the Abercorn family. Nowadays an Irish Bishop is selected by a process as democratic as the choice of a Trade Union Secretary or President ; and beyond doubt they get some good men. But, though an unecclesiastically minded person, I have great connoisseurship in bishops, and none of them all has come up to my recollections of the first I ever knew.

Early impressions concern chiefly his bulk, which was magnificent ; I remember how once when he stayed at the rectory my mother's phaeton collapsed under him on the way back from church. In later days he preached always from the altar steps ; pulpits were not built to his scale.

But what a voice ! And what beauty of language came rolling out with it ! Also, what a position ! I think the income in his day was ten thousand, and he had been appointed very young. Under the financial arrangements of the Disestablishment Act, the Church at large gained an endowment proportioned to the Bishop's life interest ; and so my father's feelings can be judged when he went to seek the Bishop at Milford on Mulroy Bay, and learnt that my uncle (then his curate) had taken Dr. Alexander out boating in a curragh. Mulroy is full of rocks and currents, and my father stood on the shore and watched twenty stone of bishop and a hundred thousand pounds of the Church's money afloat on tarred calico and bent willow-rods in the tide-rip of that tricky water.

My father became Dean of Raphoe (a titular office) while at Ramelton, and was Bishop Alexander's right-hand man in all diocesan business and especially over finance. But naturally, he was a resource also in scholarship, and helped much over certain Epistles in the Speaker's Commentary. One indeed was wholly assigned to him. Intercourse with the Palace must have been a great delight to him. All the sons and daughters were more than commonly clever and witty people, and Mrs. Alexander, the hymn-writer perhaps the most humorous of them all. My father never came back from Derry without some tale about her, generally against her, and nearly always told by herself. Once it was the expression of some fiery Protestants who were very severe on " that woman Jezebel " ; for the author of " There is a green hill far away " had not escaped the suspicion of Popery which indeed is hard to avoid in Derry. But the Alexander family were valiant Derry folk, and once my father brought back a printed alphabet which had certainly been composed there :

" A was the Ardour with which we burnt Lundy
In spite of the magistrates' noses on Monday.
B was the Bandroom of Prentice Boys Bold,
Where Lundy was burnt and the Bobbies were sold."

There was even a strong rumour that the effigy of Lundy had been concealed that year in the Palace garrets—for the annual celebration of the shutting of the gates had been forbidden, and the customary burning of the traitor's effigy had to be done by surprise tactics.

Yet neither the Bishop nor Mrs. Alexander, nor any one of their children would willingly have said a word to offend their Catholic neighbours. When Dr. Alexander lived at Armagh as Primate of all Ireland, there grew up between him and the Catholic Primate, Cardinal Logue, a most touching friendship; and when the long hope of a life was accomplished, and the superb new Catholic Cathedral came to be opened, Archbishop Alexander requested that his carriage and horses might have the honour of carrying the old Cardinal ceremonially to its door.

As for our way of life there, and the austere charm of Donegal—"the stern colour and the delicate line" that Yeats writes of—I must not begin about them, or I should never finish. But something should be said about our early companionships. My mother's brothers counted for much in these, and it was they who taught me to shoot and fish. Yet we formed other and even stronger ties. Fosterage in ancient Ireland counted for more even than kinship, and it was a sort of fosterage that bound us to certain households—those who were at first glebe tenants and, later, after Disestablishment, purchased their little farms.

Pat McDaid was one of the glebe tenants, away upon the moor which stretched back and up from the belt of trees which surrounded Aghnagaddy Rectory. He was a woodman, and taught me to use a hatchet—one of the few things that I can still do to the satisfaction of what we call "a labouring man." Three of his daughters came to us, two mostly for field-work; but Mary McDaid goes back as far as my memory can reach, and she stayed with us till my father died, except for some few years when she went with my uncle and his wife to County Limerick. Forty-five years she spent in making us comfortable and then she went

back to the little cottage on the moor. My daughter and I looked in upon her there last summer: wet weather had made a turf famine in the country, and Mary was trying to bake bread over a fire of heather and whin-bushes, and making so poor a hand at it that her sisters laughed at her and took on the job—not strange to them, but very unfamiliar to Mary's lifelong experience of the coal hearths that she kept so trim. And for her devotions, instead of walking down a couple of paved streets, electric lit, she must tramp two long miles each way in a country where rain and wind are dreadfully plenty. But in her cottage or in our house Mary kept always her dignity and her beauty of holiness. I go much to a little restaurant in Soho where there is a young Italian woman who has the same repose of bearing and the same welcoming eyes.

A very different person was the old nurse who came to us so far back that I cannot remember her coming; but my second brother was her first nurseling. She must have been thirty years in the household, ready to cut herself in pieces for the boys who grew up in her charge, and making life a burden to my two sisters. As for what the succession of nursery maids suffered—most of them “wild wee cutties,” brought in to be trained to service—it is uncountable. But when there was sickness, in spite of her bulk—as broad as it was long—her feet padded like an animal's in the jungle. She was a real Protestant and always refused to eat with “Papish trash”—such as Mary McDaid.

Town bred she was, with no fitness for country life; and her daughter who came with her as nursery maid took after her in this—a slight, delicate pretty girl, clever-handed, who grew up a perfect ladies' maid—loving the touch of fine things and everything exquisite about her. Yet it was her fate to spend her life in a long struggle with the roughest form of hardship, in the company of as good and as able a man as I have ever known. Perhaps she may be counted a victim to Ireland's dominant passion, which made her husband spend himself on those ungrateful acres of poor soil;

yet perhaps she was a heroine in the biggest of all fights. The history of that farm for the last fifty years if it could be written would be an epic of human endeavour ; it would be also a document of singular value to illustrate the history of Ireland.

She married Johnny Coyle, son of Robert our coachman and his wife Maria. Johnny was born like me at St. Columba's, but seven or eight years earlier. He grew up in our great barrack of a rectory, got his schooling at Ramelton, and, being a reader by nature, had his run of the books in the house. Maria was cook and used to spoil my sister and me ; the delight of our lives was to have " tea under the table " sitting on the stretchers under the long kitchen board. But when the Church Act came, Robert got his chance of a holding and took it. The fields lay inside of the old rectory demesne, six of them, strung out inconveniently round the edge of it. But the fields were to some degree protected by the shelter belt of small bushes ; Robert had to build his cottage outside this on the bleak stretch of moor thrown in with the holding. The stone was quarried beside the cottage—no lack of that, anyhow. " The Moor " became a second nursery for us. For these fifty-five years, whatever has affected our family has brought pleasure or disappointment, grief or rejoicing, to that homestead—which was really, for ourselves, part of our home. If all other doors were closed against me, I would count on a shelter there.

Johnny (he is " old Mr. Coyle " now to the rector who is in my father's place, but he remains Johnny to us) went with his parents to farm. Had they been Catholics, he would almost certainly have been made a priest ; and if he had taken to some blackcoated job, his life would have been easier. But his father needed help to work the farm, and in Ireland the farm comes first. It is the family inheritance : it is the central fact of family life. In some ways Johnny learned farming from an able teacher ; his father was a good horse-leech and cow-doctor, and a capable worker on the land ;

and in those days the Franco-Prussian War had set agriculture on its legs. But, for that reason, the Church tenants bought at prices calculated in a boom period; and the instalments were high. Also, they borrowed money for building from a society, repayable by other instalments. Thus the venture began under a load of debt incurred when farmers seemed—as they did in 1918—able to pay off rapidly. In two years came the slump—as in 1920. Long before that Johnny Coyle was courting Emily Finamore. His people opposed, but he had his way and married very young. A new cottage was built on to the original one; and this cottage had boarded floors. That was fifty years ago. The studious-looking boy grew into a fine workman, proud of the swathe he could sweep with the scythe; and though his father, as is the usage, was master and directed everything, yet he continued to read and to apply his reading to the direction of the work. Years went on, children came, the delicate, soft-handed young woman was strained with lifting heavy pots on to the black hook over the turf fire; it was her business to get mashes for the cattle, to beat up the pig food; and it was an overstrain. Meantime, debts did not get cleared; the elder man liked his glass too well at times, and Johnny, denying himself everything that could be denied, saw hard won money melt. There came times when Emily had to go away for long periods into service; but nothing impaired the attachment of husband and wife; I have never known a stronger tie. Meantime Johnny and his father in the winter months, when little could be done on the made fields, turned to and hacked rather than dug up some of the moor in front of their house. Economically the result would never pay for the labour spent; but the labour was there and they spent it; and there is an acre of potato-bearing ground now where were nothing but lean scraws of heather and stone; and there is a shelter-screen of trees about the homestead where there was only bareness.

The like has been done in tens of thousands of cases in

Ireland by small tenants, whose industry (as Shaw has said in a play) is not human: it is like the industry of ants. Johnny had that industry, that passion for the farm; but with it he had the mind of a man fitter to direct labour on a great estate than to be crippling himself with spade and pick. His applied reading changed the course of cultivation on that little farm; times of sowing and planting were altered; and what he did began to be noticed and copied by the bigger men about. They were forced to notice it, because this man, with his thirty acres of very poor land, year after year produced oats that beat or at least equalled their best in the market. He had no capital for machinery; ten or fifteen years ago he showed me a winnowing machine that he had constructed for himself without a model to work by. Nor had he good fortune. His eldest son almost died of a disease which left him little more than a half-power worker; of two others that went to Canada, the hopefulest and the best fitted to send back help, as the Irish do, was drowned in a tragic accident. He himself is bent and old beyond his years after a lifetime spent on land, which if it were left to itself for five seasons would all run back into heather or rushes; yet there it is—the pride and the passion of his heart.

Where there is passion, there is drama, sooner or later. Under the new order, Aghnagaddy ceased to be a rectory, was sold, and passed from one to another; and one of the owners denied a right of way which had in my memory always been used. When next I came back to visit this friend of my childhood he told me the story. Standing at the gap into his field from the lane by which he had been used to cart, he described how he and his neighbours had passed a day there, breaking down the permanent barrier as fast as it was put up. Even in the telling, his whole body was transfigured with rage, and I could see the passion at work which has led to uncounted man-slayings in Ireland. I could easily believe his word that a little thing might have given that day a bloody ending. With the like of him, when the

rage was over, the danger passed ; with the less civilized and Christianized folk that we have in other parts, the danger would have lasted as long as the resentment ; and I would not say that the resentment was dead in him yet.

Yet some years later, as he ploughed one of the fields, a daughter of the house whose very sight he shunned came running in dismay : " Mr. Coyle," she cried to him, " Aghnagaddy is on fire, for God's sake come and help us." He stopped in the furrow and was silent for a while (he himself told me) and then he said, " That is a hard thing you are asking me." One can judge what the passion of the land is in Ireland, and what are the resentments it can breed, when such a man made such an answer. But then he flung the plough ropes to the child who was with him, telling him to get the horses home as best he could ; and he ran over to the house. Knowing every corner of it, for he had been reared there, he took command of the work. All they could do was to save the gear ; the fire had too strong a hold ; but what one man could do, he did.

There he is still ; and of all men I have known, his reward has been least proportioned to his ability and his labour

He was very angry of late when it was proposed to take Donegal or part of it from the Free State. " We will not be put out of Ireland," he said.

Though I have adored that country all my life and never felt its beauty more than this last summer ; though I spent all my school holidays shooting or fishing in it and killed my first salmon in the Lennan ; though I have friends there in plenty, some of them going back to my schooldays—yet for me Donegal really means the moor, where lasting friendship and affection knit me to a man on the land, part of the land, with the traditional feeling for the land and skill of the land in his very fibres, and at the same time having as clear and informed a judgment on the welfare of the country and its people as can be found within Ireland's four seas.

All the most part of my knowledge about Ireland came from Donegal ; I got my education there. It was there also

that I and all of us, except the very youngest, learnt to learn; and my mother was the teacher. Ten children of hers grew up, and she taught the whole of them to the school-going point. My father supplemented with a little Latin and Greek; and from about halfway down the long list, a deal of her work was done by deputy; elder children taught the younger; but she was always the mistress of studies and, if results are a test, few could beat her. The list of the examinations passed by her sons would be a terrifying document. My own contribution was very modest, and I only just got away from school in time to save myself from being passed by my second brother, four years younger. He was the first of three who became Fellows of Trinity: the other two who went to Trinity won places in the Indian Civil.

Yet I do not think that all this can reasonably be attributed to my mother. Nothing is more hereditary than the examination-passing knack, and my sons in their turn developed it so strongly that my elder daughter was inclined to condone the whole thing as an unworthy kind of pot-hunting, and decided to be a market-gardener. But in the course of her training she also had to submit to be examined and after the test came to me with a wry face of amusement. "There's a curse on this family," she said; "I'm first in digging."

I may add a couple of observations. First, the one of us who has beyond all question achieved most distinction had much the least of this special talent. The present Commandant of the Staff College scraped into Woolwich low down in the list. But he went out pretty high, having got on to his job. Second, anybody who spells right instinctively will always be able to pass examinations, and he was the only one of my brothers I ever knew to misspell a word. In this he resembled my sisters, who, considering all things, have been admirably unacademic. Thirdly, this same brother is financially the most prosperous of the six who survive. A family of brothers, long established in life, among whom a serving soldier is the best paid, may be able

to do quite a number of things ; but clearly their aptitudes do not include the gift of making money.

My school days began in 1876, and from that time till the end of the century some one of us (and generally two) appeared in the lists at St. Columba's. The school was run somewhat on English lines—which to Ireland seemed High Church. The staff were English with one exception, George Alcock, the subwarden, a scholar with the true feeling for scholarship ; not a good schoolmaster, for he was one of those ill-fitted to cope with that savage animal, the human boy, but a good teacher and dear friend to all of us. I read my first Greek play with him : it was the *Prometheus Vincitus*, and though I was only thirteen it gave as genuine pleasure as any poetry I have read in my life. It is a mistake to start boys on Euripides ; that is for mature minds ; the epic drama of Aeschylus makes itself far more easily comprehended by the young. As for the difficulty, I know that I enjoyed the *Prometheus* long before I learnt to enjoy Homer. All of us brothers had in succession the privilege of sitting in Alcock's room out of school hours—no small boon in those Spartan days, when access to a fire was almost impossible. He used to come and stay with us in Donegal too, and helped me to land my first salmon, on a trout cast. The world used him hardly ; schoolmastering in those days, except in the biggest schools, was an evil profession for a layman to grow old in. Nearly the only thing that gives me pleasure in the thought of him is to know that his existence was much cheered by his friendship with my mother. He was the type of man that appealed to her—chiefly by the strain of unhappiness which underlay his kindness, but also by his quaint wit.

Very different was the Warden, who had succeeded my afther. The Reverend Robert Rice was an Englishman, with an Oxford degree, but no marked intellectual distinction, nor was he personally liked. But he was a very good schoolmaster. I found when I got to Oxford that I had received a much broader education than the other scholars of my

college ; but my strongest reason for believing that we were well taught, that is to say, were made to develop our brains, is this. The school averaged, during my six years there, about seventy boys ; and I doubt if more than twenty of my contemporaries entered the army. Yet three of those senior to me (prefects when I was a small boy) became General officers (W. E. and V. T. Bunbury and J. Fry), while those who were small boys when I was head of the school included my brother, now Major General, in command in the Staff College, Sir Alfred Knox, M.P., retired after a most brilliant career, and his brother Major General H. Knox, Director of Military Education.

Again, the elder brother of these two, Vesey Knox, had a career which would have been impossible had not the school teaching possessed considerable elasticity. He showed no gift for either classics or mathematics but a marked talent for history. This was encouraged and he won a scholarship in history at Keble in 1883. Three years later he took his first in history, and immediately after, a fellowship at All Souls.

In later life I always considered that Vesey Knox's success fell short of his ability, though he made his mark in Parliament and then earned a large income at the Parliamentary Bar. But he had one good fortune, which should be counted as ample compensation. Being left a widower early, he married a widow, Max Beerbohm's sister. We knew her in London as Mrs. Nevill, among the circle of people who wrote for the *Yellow Book*. She was then a dressmaker, and the ladies I have known who had most genius for clothes got their dresses made by her whenever they could afford to. I have met her since then in the North of Ireland, in her new surroundings ; and it would be hard to say in which of these settings she left the more delightful impression.

Vesey Knox when he was at St. Columba's was a Nationalist, which to us all seemed the most outrageous kind of free-thinking. Also, he used to receive a newspaper and read it—a fact for which there was no parallel. He was, for the

rest of us, the only indication that there could be two opinions about political questions in Ireland. Probably during the first half of my school days, none of us were aware that political questions existed. But from 1879 onwards, that could not be so ; the Land War had begun.

It is worth while to fix dates. 1876, the year in which I went to school, was the year when Parnell the new Parliament. The Land League was formed in 1879, and in 1880 Parnell became Leader of the Irish Party in the new Parliament. In 1881 came the Land Act, which established State control of rents. This limitation of the "rights of property" meant that Parnell and the Land League had won. The tenant had acquired a part-ownership in the land. So long as the rent fixed by a court was paid, he and his could hold the land from generation to generation. The landlord had lost the uncontrolled right of eviction. He could no longer put out a tenant of whom he disapproved. Eviction as a punishment was ended. Nor was the rent any longer to be fixed by competition—competition like that for bread in a besieged town. An English tourist once marvelled at the rents paid for bits of bog or mountain ; but the car driver pointed to a pool of bog-water. "If you had that in hell," he said, "you'd get big money for it."

Necessarily, one began to think a little in those days. My uncle Edward O'Brien took a post on one of the sub-commissions which were set out all over Ireland fixing the fair rent, each of them having a landlord's representative. He was a big landlord : he was agreeing to reductions of about five shillings in the pound ; yet he complained of the Act as unfair. "I am doing justice to the tenants, and injustice to the landlords," he said when I asked him. Such an answer from a very clear mind was puzzling, anyhow

But what we all at St. Columba's felt about the Land League and Land Leaguers when we did not think, but simply reflected the opinions of the class we came from, is illustrated by a work of which, alas ! I have lost my copy.

One of my pleasantest school friends was Richard Orpen, the architect, who had more than a little of the gift which has made his younger brother world-famous. ("Billy" was first known to me as a preternaturally small boy, fagging tennis balls for his elder brothers and myself.) Richard Orpen's pencil brought him into trouble many times; the caricaturist at school is drastically dealt with. But it brought him fame when we learnt that a publisher had actually brought out *An Irish A.B.C.*—with pigs and Land Leaguers figuring in the traditional manner. It was rebel Ireland seen as Cruickshank saw it, and we all thought it the only right way to see

Strangely enough, if Richard Orpen had only known, one of the most sinister figures in the grim underworld of that revolutionary time was there for his study. In the autumn of 1881 we got together money for an asphalt lawn-tennis court, and the contract was given to people who had done this work for the Fitzwilliam Club. The ganger of the workmen was a little monkey-faced man called Brady and he was full of monkey tricks. Once while a few of us were watching the work, he strolled up behind one of the labourers, slipped something into his tail pocket, winked at us and strolled away. In a minute there was a puff of smoke and a howl: it had been one of the detonators used in blasting. Even to schoolboys that seemed an excessive form of humour.

On a Sunday morning in the May after that, we were all assembled in procession in the Cloister, ready to go in to midday chapel, when a buzz of excited talk ran along; servants back from their church had brought the news of the Phoenix Park murders. We were far enough then from guessing that our Mr. Brady had been the chief assassin in that gang of Invincibles.

Long afterwards I learnt (from Willy Redmond who knew the priest) that this same Brady was at least a hard-bitten desperado. He was the only one of the gang who did not offer to turn informer; and though he expressed suitable contrition for all other offences, and was sorry for the fact

that Lord Frederick Cavendish got killed, nothing could induce him to admit to his confessor that he was not doing his duty as an Irish Nationalist in taking the life of Mr. Burke, the Under Secretary—against whom alone the plot was laid

A later sidelight I got on those times, when the Irish Revolution was in its first violent phase. A handsome Tipperary man, prominent in Gaelic athletic organization, was talking of things then a quarter of a century old. In 1881 when Mr. Forster filled the Irish jails with people arrested on suspicion, he had the distinction of being "the youngest suspect in Ireland." In Dundalk jail he met for the first time, he said, men of real education; he also met men of Brady's type. When the jail delivery began, after the "Kilmainham Treaty," certain prisoners learnt mysteriously who was next to come out, and one of them came to my friend, said he would be released next Friday, and asked if he would go with a message to a certain public-house in Dublin. The boy agreed—he was only sixteen—and in Dublin he got a great welcome. In the evening, men came in who had much talk with him, and pressed him to stay over the next day and "go for a drive into the country." Luckily a reception had been arranged for him in his own parish in Tipperary, and he started on the Saturday morning. In the afternoon his acquaintances took their drive—to the Phoenix Park. They were Brady and the others.

The rest of his story illustrated so well what happens in a country infested by secret societies that I set it down. From Tipperary he was sent off to Paris with sealed letters, which he was to deliver at a specified address to a person giving a password. He went, totally ignorant of French, but managed to execute the commission, and after some weeks came home. Then, since association with educated persons in Dundalk jail (one of the political academies which English rule from time to time established) had convinced him of his shortcomings, he went as a boarder to a leading Irish school,

where no doubt he imparted as much education as he received.

Naturally, while secret societies and the Land League were contending for mastery in Ireland, with the Government declaring war on both, English opinion expressed itself freely about the Irish character. It was these expressions of opinion which made me begin to think seriously, when I went to Oxford. My views formed themselves under the stimulus of hearing my country abused ; and scores of other young Irishmen at Oxford and Cambridge have in the same way been made to realize that they were Nationalists.

I think, however, that my views ceased to be mere views and became nourished on fact in the spring of 1883, when I spent part of my first Easter vacation at Queenstown, observing the people who passed through the lodging-house kept by my aunt Charlotte O'Brien. "State-aided emigration" was the Government's cure for Irish trouble at that moment ; it meant paying five pounds a head to any person in Ireland who was willing to quit the country. There was no test of fitness ; the old, the infirm, the imbecile, went along with the healthy boys and girls and the families of young children ; going out they knew not where, many of them clad in garments thrown at them from a slop shop, and without a penny to their names when they landed. I had enough sense to know that no civilized State would deal so with those whom it really felt to be of its own household.

CHAPTER II

OXFORD

How and why I was sent to try my luck at Oxford has always been something of a puzzle to me : but I suppose my father, whose interest in St. Columba's was close and keen, conformed to the wishes of the Warden and still more of the Sub-warden, George Alcock, both of whom were Oxford men : and it was long since the school had won a scholarship in England. But somehow I was a misfit at Oxford, just as surely as my brothers, five of them in succession, fell easily and happily into their places in T.C.D. Partly, no doubt, the fault was my own : I did not become easily adaptable until I was over thirty. But in part it was due to the Oxford tradition that I found myself less at home there than in any society with which I have mixed, in a rather variegated life. When advice has been asked from me, I have always counselled against sending either boy or girl direct from an Irish upbringing to an English university.

What I am writing here must sound ungracious : but true it is that the love which I have for Oxford came to me in later life, and the sense which I have of what Oxford may mean to the right young people springs from my watching younger lives. I have seen a boy, who was consistently and persistently and indomitably unhappy during all the phases of his school life, turn into a creature radiant, walking on air, swimming in felicity, from the moment that he became an undergraduate. Bliss lasted for two years and then there

was trouble about exams : but Geoffrey Dearmer—for he is my example—had got as much as anyone I ever knew of the real Oxford teaching, which is given by the atmosphere and surroundings and associations and companionships of the place. The war overshadowed other influences in the earliest of his poetry, but what is best in it (and I like nothing else so well in the verse of the younger generation) came out of that happy flowering of his nature which Oxford induced. And for a companion instance, I should not need to go far : my niece, daughter of my brother Lucius, got as much pleasure and profit out of her Oxford years as her father did from his in Trinity : and I could not put it higher.

Neither of these young people came up with any great wealth of acquaintance to begin on : but neither of them was so wholly a stranger as I, when in October, 1882, my scout showed me to my rooms in Brasenose.

In January of that year I had come over with my father, to try for a scholarship, and he took me first to see London, where he was an excellent cicerone, for he had a real love of seeing things as well as very wide knowledge. At Oxford we went to dinners with his acquaintances, which was rather intimidating for my raw youth. But one household received us with so much charm and friendliness that shyness vanished ; besides, they were Irish people, hereditary friends. Henry Butcher's father, the Bishop of Meath, had been my father's tutor in Trinity : his wife was the daughter of Archbishop Trench, and his sister Eleanor was the close friend of my O'Brien kinsfolk. All these three people had beauty and charm in the rarest measure : and Henry Butcher was already famous as joint author with Lang in the translation of the *Odyssey*.

But, to my lifelong regret, when I came up in October, the Butchers had been transplanted to a professorship in Edinburgh, and I scarcely knew a single undergraduate in the University. English hospitality is very great but it is slow moving, and one slowly drifted into acquaintance-

ship Things would have gone quicker had I either rowed or played football ; but these were not among my accomplishments. However, gradually I found myself living with the scholars of my year, and of the year senior to it. For B.N.C. in those days was very sharply divided into two sets, and the smaller consisted almost entirely of scholars and exhibitioners. A few scholars were in the larger group, especially men who rowed. But the real dividing line was money. The main life of the college was organized on a scale quite beyond the means of the man who had only his scholarship and perhaps a hundred a year of an allowance : so that in effect the lack of money acted as a social disqualification and limited one's choice of acquaintance and friendship. This was alien to my Irish ideas and I never got used to it. Nobody likes to be classed as a smug because he is less well off than his neighbours.

One may own up—and I do—to not being what the Americans call “a good mixer” : but it was not simply my fault. I recall, for instance, the case of one man in my year—J. H. Ware, a huge athlete who broke all records for weight-throwing, and became a personage on the river. As he moved into the rowing set, he moved—by no choice of his own—automatically and inevitably out of touch with many of us who had seen much of him : and we were the losers. I remember also G. R. Askwith (now Lord Askwith) making friendly advances to me : but no more came of it : our ways of life were too separate. Small as our community was—some 120 men—about a third of it was clean cut off from the rest : and it was only in 1916 or so that I realized I had been up for a couple of years with the famous soldier whom I never knew by sight till Lord Haig was our guest of honour at a great B.N.C. dinner in 1919.

This dividedness was recognized, and was recognized as an evil in those years ; and in 1885 an energetic young man, Chandler, afterwards Bishop of Bloemfontein, when he was elected Fellow, tried to shake us up together. There were various gatherings in his rooms : but the under-

graduates sniffed at each other suspiciously, like strange dogs when they are brought together. I was one of the people he tried to use as a point of contact, but had no success. A couple of years later, he got the man he wanted, when John Buchan came up, having already passed through a Scotch University and gained confidence and knowledge of the undergraduate world. He and Chandler between them made a healthy revolution in the college, which has lasted.

Nevertheless I think that Oxford everywhere still lacks the simplicity of living which alone makes equal comradeship possible all round. The trouble begins in the public schools where too high a standard of personal expenditure is permitted, if not encouraged: and it certainly deprived all those of us who lacked money of much of the profit of our university time. For the best part of university education is given by the young to the young.

Those who came from the bigger English Schools had a wide range of friendships outside college: one in the year senior to me lived almost entirely with other Wykehamists. I remember his declaring that he had been disappointed with Oxford. "But," he said, "after sixth form room at Winchester, I suppose one must expect to be disappointed for the rest of one's life." No other school has quite so good a conceit of itself; but perhaps none justifies it so well.

I lived mostly for my first two years with men who were heading for Orders, and for the latter two with men who were making for journalism. The leading spirit in this latter set was as complete a Bohemian as I have ever known and very good company. We all played lawn tennis and fives a little and whist an immense deal. But I never lost touch with two of my sedater friends, W. B. Selbie, now Principal of Mansfield College, and Herbert Read of the Colonial Office, now Sir Herbert, Governor of Mauritius.

A good many people went to lectures with me whom I should like to have known: Quiller Couch, for instance.

I have a vivid memory of him, with flaming red hair, an ultramarine blue waistcoat and an air of having sat up too late the night before. He found his way very soon into his right trade: *Troy Town* must have been written just after he graduated. It is an odd thing that the chances of life never threw me into touch with him in our literary careers, nor gave me the chance of saying in print how much pleasure his writing had given me.

Gilbert Murray also sat at the same long table with me many times—not likely to be unnoticed, for he was sweeping the board of University prizes. I remember chiefly his large brown eyes and his quietness—but even then there was a something about him, a sort of emanation which marked an elect nature. We did not meet until long after, during the European War, when this pacifist of to-day did not conceal that he envied me for having got into the line. He was one of the few English Liberals to whom I could talk about Ireland without feeling a desire to turn Unionist: that sympathy of his was based on understanding. His absorption in international politics leaves me with a thankfulness that the League of Nations did not come twenty years earlier, or we should never have seen Euripides brought back to life on the English stage by certainly one of the most remarkable achievements in literature. If I had the Nobel prize to give, I would give it to Gilbert Murray, and all the more because he deserted literature and scholarship to run knight-erranting all over Europe.

The figure of most interest in those days for bookish young men was D. S. MacColl, older a good deal than the rest of us and already maturing; he had graduated at London before coming to Oxford. With his drooping black moustaches, thick hair and aquiline features he was good to see, and his dress had a touch of what was then called the aesthetic. But he looked a lean, hard-bitten Scot none the less. Later on, I came to think his art criticism the best that was being written.

The Union had only one notable undergraduate speaker

in my day—Cosmo Gordon Lang. I wonder how many other men besides me resented his becoming Archbishop of York at an indecently early date. It was the first thing that made me feel my age. But he was a sympathetic personality as a Union speaker; thirty years later, his efforts as a debater in the House of Lords striving to reach solid ground about the Irish difficulty, commanded my sympathy. If he did not get to solid ground who is to blame him? At least he made a genuine attempt.

Other people were watched then, because it was evident they would be heard of again, for instance the present Lord Salisbury and his brother Lord William Cecil. I should like to have heard Lord Hugh as an undergraduate, but he was of a later date. The one speaker, other than Dr. Lang, who left some mark on my mind was G. Hudson Shaw, now Rector of St. Botolph: and he was a mouth-piece of that desire to do good which in some form or other always haunts the young. At that time, the fashionable crusade was work in the settlements among the slum dwellers.

Ruskin helped it. I should say that his was the strongest influence working on the young men in the eighties—none the less because the direction of his impulse was wholly vague. He inspired enthusiasm; about that there was no mistake. His election to the second term of the Slade professorship took place in 1884, and he was announced to lecture at the Science Schools, by the park. I went off, never dreaming of difficulty about getting into any professorial lecture; but all the accesses were blocked, and finally I, and I rather think it was Ware (which would account for our success), squeezed in between the Vice-Chancellor and his attendants as they forced a passage. All the young women in Oxford (not one in a hundred of what there are now, but still a good few) and all the girls' schools had got in before us and filled the semi-circular auditorium. Every inch was crowded, and still no lecturer; and it was not apparent how he could arrive. Presently there was a com-

motion in the doorway, and over the heads and shoulders of tightly packed young men, a loose bundle was handed in and down the steps, till on the floor a small figure was deposited, which stood up and shook itself out, amused and good humoured, climbed on to the dais, spread out papers and began to read in a pleasant though fluting voice. Long hair, brown with grey through it ; a soft brown beard, also streaked with grey ; some loose kind of black garment (possibly to be described as a frock coat) with a master's gown over it ; loose baggy trousers, almost precursors of the present Oxford atrocity ; a thin gold chain round his neck with glass suspended, a lump of soft tie of some finely spun blue silk ; and eyes much bluer than the tie : that was Ruskin as he came back to Oxford.

The discourse was read—read indeed from print—but read with great animation : even in the most carefully built up sentences the style never lost its touch with spoken speech. But more than all was the charm of the personality, the simplicity and at the same time the evident unuttered response to a tribute ; one could feel that he felt our reception of him, and felt that he could repay it ; knew that he had something for our hearing and that he knew it would be heard. After the first lecture, tickets, I think, were issued : anyhow, some order was established : I attended them all and cannot now recall their subjects. But the soil of your garden cannot tell you all that has been dug into it, nor what each element was transformed into ; only, I am very sure that what Ruskin's lectures helped to grow were flowers not weeds. I never saw anyone so delightedly at home with an audience : at times he wandered a little, and once talking about birds explained—Heaven knows why—that one class were Rasores “ the scratchers,” and he illustrated the action with energetic backward scraping of his feet, the gown kicking up behind. It was informal, comic to the point of being undignified, but we were all far too much in love with him to find fault.

The strength of his hold showed one day by accident.

William Morris had come to lecture on "Art and Plutocracy" in the hall of University College. The title did not suggest an exhortation to join a Socialist alliance, but that was what we got. When he ended, the Master of University, Dr. Bright, stood up and instead of returning thanks, protested that the hall had been lent for a lecture on art and would certainly not have been made available for preaching Socialism. He stammered a little at all times, and now, finding the ingracious words literally stick in his throat, sat down, leaving the remonstrance incomplete but clearly indicated. The situation was most unpleasant. Morris at any time was choleric and his face flamed red over his white shirt front: he probably thought he had conceded enough by assuming against his usage a conventional garb. There was a hubbub, and then from the audience Ruskin rose and instantly there was quiet. With a few courteous well chosen sentences he made everybody feel that we were an assembly of gentlemen, that Morris was not only an artist but a gentleman and an Oxford man, and had said or done nothing which gentlemen in Oxford should resent; and the whole storm subsided before that gentle authority.

I had heard Morris lecture before, at the Clarendon Rooms, when he appeared in his usual clothes: a blue flannel shirt with turned-down collar, and a square-cut jacket of dark indigo which with his broad, handsome, bearded face gave him the aspect of a sea-captain ashore. Naturally, however, after the incident I have just described, there was no more question of lecturing in college halls for Morris; but his lecture had excited keen interest, and he appeared about once a year on Oxford platforms. Once, I think, he came down to support Mr. Champion, who offered himself to the ordeal of heckling by an Oxford audience. Mr. Champion lost his temper, and so did Morris, whose interpositions in the debate mended no holes in the argument. There never was a less competent disputant. The last of these appearances which I saw was at some

rooms down by Holywell, and it ended grotesquely enough. Some youthful High Tory, who aspired to a special notoriety, resented this invasion of Oxford by the enemy. Accordingly, he provided himself with a large bottle of sulphuretted hydrogen, which he opened surreptitiously at the back of the room. The effect was instantaneous. I remember the astonished faces of people on the platform ; till, as the wave of pocket-handkerchiefs spread towards them, they gradually discovered the grim fact.

I assisted also at Morris's first and only attempt to spread his propaganda in Dublin, and it was exceedingly funny and instructive. There was a certain working men's club which met for debate on Saturday nights, somewhere on the north side of the town. Here in those days they either talked, or were said to talk, not disapprovingly of dynamite, and Morris no doubt expected that any mild revolutionary project would command their favour. It was a long, dingy room, packed with three or four hundred men. Morris came on the platform with his familiar blue shirt and the halo of hair, a broad bluff figure, with rolling gait, suggesting inevitably a Dutch skipper. He said the familiar things with his accustomed eloquence. You never saw an audience more respectful or less responsive. What in the world did Irish working men care about art ? They wanted to be told about a Parliament in College Green or the iniquities of England. As for the Socialism, they were quite clear about that. When Morris had finished, a local orator rose up—an artisan also, but there are exceptions everywhere—and began to declaim the most commonplace theories of militant Socialism. Instantly he was hooted. After a long contention between speaker, chairman, and audience, the speech came to an end. Another working man rose up. They were all courageous politicians, he said ; they were not afraid of anyone. But Socialism meant Atheism, and Atheism meant blasphemy ; and if the English people took up Socialism, so much the worse for them ; but he wished to God Mr. Morris, whom they all respected as a famous man,

would keep these revolutionary ideas for his own side of the Channel and not come here to disturb a decent, quiet country with them. Morris's face was a study. The Socialist artisan got up again to reply ; but the meeting howled at him. At the back of the room, contrary to all order, a one-legged beggar-man rose from his bench ; it sticks in my head that Toomey was his name, and an affluent orator he was. In vain the chairman remonstrated and begged him to let the other finish, and then come on to the platform. He was not to be stopped. Then in the lightness of our hearts, some of us younger men, who had gone there as a kind of retinue with Morris, went to enforce the chairman's authority, and pulled him down. In a moment sticks were flying all over the room, and we expected our end ; when someone, with amazing presence of mind (perhaps, indeed, he was a functionary retained for the purpose) turned off the gas at the meter and plunged us in total darkness. There was a moment's dead silence ; then a roar of laughter, and we all groped our way harmoniously down the narrow stairs.

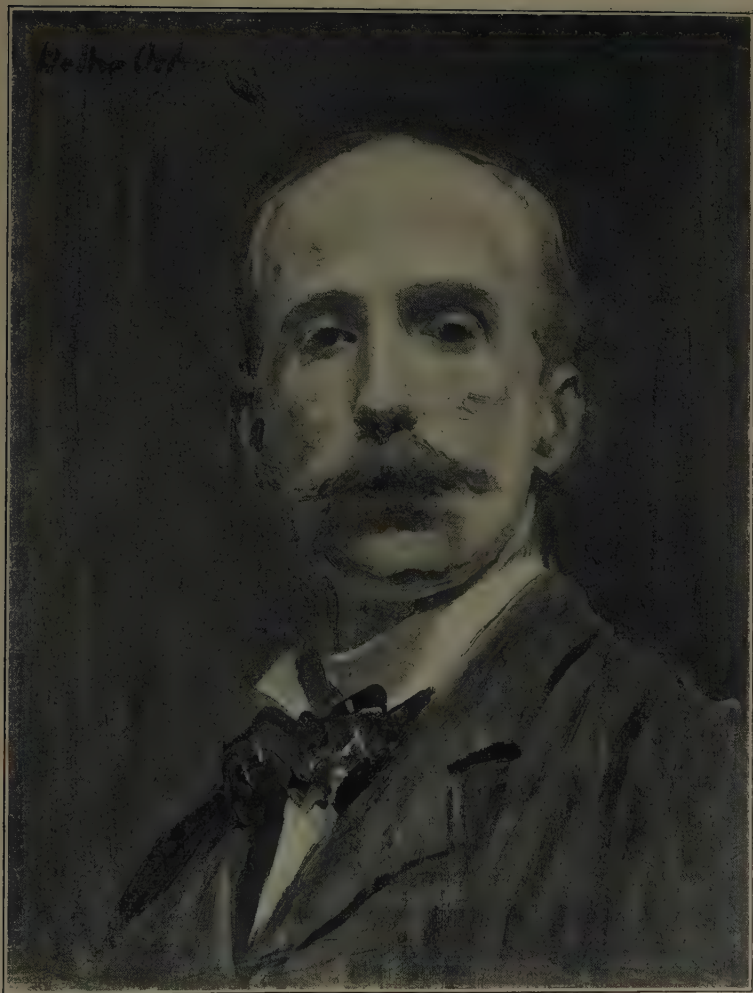
We who went back with Morris to his hotel, consoled ourselves with whisky and water, and heard his expressions. Never, he said, in his life had he been in an assemblage of such Godforsaken reactionary Tories. It was a new class of epithets for that particular congregation.

The evening did not end there : a party escorted the poet round to the Contemporary Club in College Green, where also on Saturday evenings the world's affairs were discussed by inquiring minds, but in a less theatrical manner. Here also Morris fared badly. Three or four clever young political barristers fell upon him, and from their exceedingly different points of view worried the poor great man with arguments and statistics ; made him contradict himself, and having demonstrated clearly that he was a very puzzle-headed old gentleman, returned to the more congenial task of quarrelling about the latest Land Bill. Three or four of us who cared more about other things than Land Bills succeeded

in drawing him into a corner, where he discoursed upon sagas to Yeats and upon stained glass to Walter Osborne, whose names, then unknown, are now sufficiently familiar. It must have been close on four when we turned out, Osborne and I, whose homeward way lay with his, accompanying Morris. I remember how sharp the air was as we walked up Grafton Street in its nightly solitude; but the poet, rolling slowly along, despising greatcoats, never seemed to feel it.

Hyndman, whom sulphuretted hydrogen silenced along with Morris, had plenty of other chances at Oxford, and I heard him address one of the audiences brought together by the Russell Club or some such society. But he, like others, found it a rash act to set oneself up as a cockshy for all the clever young dons. Henry George tried the same thing, and the consequences were even worse—and more unexpected. Mr. Conybeare, the mildest voiced and the mildest mannered of Radical economists, was putting some objections to “Mr. George’s nostrum,” when the lecturer leapt to his feet, and with blazing eyes said that he did not come there to be insulted. His passion was such that one expected a revolver to flash out when the Chairman (York Powell, I think), as puzzled as the rest of us, asked him to state his grievance. Protestations from Mr. Conybeare were fresh fuel, but at last the explanation came. “He called my scheme a nostrum, sir. Now, sir, on my side of the Atlantic, nostrum is not a word that gentlemen use in speaking of each other’s projects.”

The only man whom I saw pass through the ordeal of heckling at Oxford with success was Michael Davitt. His opening speech did not carry his listeners with him, though perhaps its moderation of tone surprised them. But when questions came along, the personal charm of the man, his candour, his perfect temper and above all that sense of manly goodness, which is more winning than anything else, wrought on his audience till the end of the meeting was a triumph. Somebody screwed him up in the rooms at



T. F. Geoghegan, Dublin.

WALTER OSBORNE,
PAINTED BY HIMSELF.

From the original in the National Gallery of Ireland.

University, where he slept that night ; but I would lay long odds that the gentlemen who carried out this traditional prank would not have done it had they heard his talk.

I never knew Davitt well, though I met him often later on, but his one-armed figure is not easily forgotten. The breadth of his brow under the rough dark hair is what stands out in my picture of him—that and the pervading benevolence which transfigured a countenance whose features might so easily have been saturnine. Suffering had set deep lines on him, the sinuous lines of a typical Celtic face ; a man does not bear ten years of penal servitude without the trace of it ; and it was his fate at one moment to have his ticket of leave cancelled and be sent back from freedom and great power to the Portland convict gang. But that rancour which is the Celt's vindictive heritage never took hold of Davitt's heart, and no one ever had a more real love for the common people of England than this son of evicted cottiers in Mayo, who was a maimed Lancashire factory lad in his teens, and in his twenties a felon by English law. Him, anyhow, it is an honour to have known.

Except that I had definitely become an Irish nationalist, I had no political allegiance in those days (and perhaps I never have had) nor was I a newspaper reader ; but the same curiosity that took me to hear political lectures carried me to many sermons. I saw Liddon's pinched face and heard his pinched voice in the University pulpit, and remember how Knox Little gave the impression that he was tearing himself to pieces in the effort to move us. But their spells did not bind me.

Nor was I personally abjugated by any of my teachers. Indeed, I think that experience is rare at Oxford and Cambridge. Sidney Campbell, a good Derry man who has been these many years a don at Christ's, told me that when he was an Edinburgh student he "lived from one lecture of Henry Butcher's to the next." But I did not gather that Cambridge, when he got there, offered Campbell any such thrill. In Universities of the Scottish type, which is also the

continental, students get their teaching from the university professor, who may be Henry Butcher, Gilbert Murray or someone of that calibre. In Oxford, we got our teaching from the college dons—the corps out of which you pick your professor. Some of the teaching was very good. A. J. Butler at Brasenose was a fine scholar with an individual sense of style and sense of humour: and the lectures which Dr. Heberden gave on Aristotle's *Poetics* were models of exposition. But in far too many cases, attending lectures meant going with thirty or forty other young men to take down in long hand a mere dictation which could quite as usefully have been handed round in print. We very seldom met the free play of a man's mind or assisted while he talked out his thoughts. I make two exceptions: R. A. Macan, afterwards Master of University, made his lectures on Herodotus a fine piece of talk. It was my fortune also to take him essays, and that was real instruction. Samuel Alexander of Lincoln, afterwards Principal of Manchester University, gave us lectures on ethics, later embodied in an excellent book; and he too kept interest awake, though he had too much indulgence for the desire to get the whole substance of his talk down. Both these teachers came in the ordinary routine of my work. But it was only, so to say, for an intellectual diversion that I went to the man whose pupils we should all have been. William Wallace, the professor of Metaphysics, was a short, grim, red-haired little Scot with a mouth that shut like a rat-trap and snapped off his sentences; yet every sentence had pith in it. He gave lectures, whether as professor or not, I cannot say, and three to four of us attended them in his own room: they were worth all the rest of the teaching put together as an intellectual experience. I suppose there was some feeling somewhere that he should be made available, for he started a course of lectures at five o'clock in the examination schools, and they were as largely attended by women as by men: I remember that, for at moments he had an embarrassing frankness. But they were brilliant, incisive stuff. Presum-

ably, he was one of the men who cannot get their personality on to paper, or we should all be still reading his books. However, so far as concerned nine-tenths of the men in my year of the Greats schools, he might as well never have existed. Liking him, I tried another Professor, Nettleship, who held the chair of Latin; and there again one had contact with a first-class mind talking informally, not just reading a discourse which had served once and would serve again. But his little entertainment was at one, and, as we generally had two or three of the collegiate lectures before that, and youth is hungry, I did not persevere with him—to my great loss, for over and above his knowledge he had charm and benignity.

Possibly they manage these things better now and arrange that those under instruction at the University shall have contact with the best minds that the University possesses; but I doubt it. Not long ago, a son of mine from the National University of Ireland, reading a post-graduate course at Oxford, met a T.C.D. man similarly employed, and said that he envied his friend the advantage of having been trained under Louis Purser. The Trinity man answered: "I saw him when I paid my fees. He was Bursar." That was all, in short, that Trinity College, Dublin, possessing the best living Latinist, could do with him, by the testimony of one of Trinity's picked scholars. The transition from school teaching to university teaching should be much more of a leap than it was in my experience; and it would be if the professors were properly used.

The oddest waste of a man that I ever knew went on in my day at Brasenose. Walter Pater was one of the resident fellows, and used to lecture a little to passmen who needed to be taught how to construe the *Apology*. Honours men saw nothing of him. Yet, since Pater was then at the height of his reputation, of course we looked at him curiously when he came in, gowned or surpliced like the rest, with his pallid face, his heavy drooping moustache and heavy drooping eyes. Interest was all the more because he was taken

to be one of the apostles of the aesthetic movement : Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience* was then a new work. But my observation was all from a distance, until one day in my second or third year somebody pointed out to me that there was a notice on the gate, which announced that Mr. Pater would attend in his rooms at a stated hour on Wednesdays in case any member of college should choose to submit an essay. So I went, knocked, entered, and found an angry Mr. Pater rising from a couch on which he had manifestly been asleep. As he was seldom in his rooms, people used not infrequently to look in, for they were elaborately decorated, having a dado of Burne Jones drawings. He took me for some such intruder, and spoke accordingly, until I reminded him of his notice—which indeed he could not be blamed for forgetting, as the dust had gathered on it unregarded. It was settled then that I should by way of experiment translate him a passage from Plato's *Republic*, and bring it next week. He was kind to me, but very precious in his comments, saying that in such an attempt one should work as though one were reproducing some exquisite design through fine tracing paper. But he did not suggest that I should bring any more essays. "Marius the the Epicurean" appeared the next year and we all read it ; I even wrote an essay about it for our essay society, and thought of bringing that to him, but thought better of it. I wish I had—for he would probably have been pleased ; and the greatest of John Buchan's deeds at B.N.C. was that he, being a determined Scot, seized Pater boldly (Chandler helping) and dragged him into the general life of college—to everybody's satisfaction. People talk about the Oxford accent and the Oxford stand-offishness : they are nothing to the Oxford shyness, which is the sterilizing cause of numberless inhibitions.

The people whom I knew at Brasenose who made most determined efforts to fight against this were singularly ill-equipped for the battle. John Wordsworth, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury, and his first wife were kind people as ever breathed, and wholly un-selfconscious ; but if you

imagine William Wordsworth the son of a bishop, and about to be a bishop himself, you will have some image of the person who set out to make friends with undergraduates in such a college as B.N.C. He was a noble figure, but austere as the mountains and lakes that the earlier Wordsworth loved; and with all his benevolence, self-centred, self-engrossed and self-sufficing, as I am very sure the poet was. It is difficult for me to believe that Wordsworth the poet was ever really friendly with anyone—and more difficult, having known his descendant. His wife made the household accessible; she was a dark-eyed Jersey-woman, daughter of "Bodley Coxe," the librarian, vivid, friendly, quick: but somehow one felt that she had grown up among innumerable volumes, and been merely transplanted from one bookshelf to another.

She had married a great scholar who was also a saint, and saints ought not to be allowed to marry; it is too hard on their wives. This man would have been perfectly in his element in one of the old Irish monastic communities, practising fierce austerities and copying endless manuscripts, and causing others to copy them, without remission day or night. The scholar's passion is not known to many people, but my father had it and my son had it; either of them would spend interminable hours seeking to ensure that a printed text should reproduce with absolute fidelity every dot and dash in the manuscript of some old scribe. But they were not saints. Every saint is a slave-driver at heart, and Bishop Wordsworth (it was worse when he became a bishop) slave-drove his secretary, his chaplain, and most of all slave-drove his wife. Serenely and authoritatively, he subordinated everything to his quest. When I had made friends with them at Oxford, they came over to Dublin, where there were manuscripts, as well as my father; and we all also in our way subserved the quest. I have never seen a man so obeyed; and in his palace at Salisbury, you could not but feel the harassed faces of those who waited on the word. At least, of all but one: nothing, I think, could harass

the countenance of the present Dean of Christ Church, who was the Bishop's Chaplain, deeply involved in the great work upon the Vulgate. But even he, I think, regarded an outsider, not under the bondage, as a relief. One learnt from him and from the lay secretary, how the Wordsworths, on coming to the Palace, proceeded to issue invitations exactly as they had done at Brasenose, with utter disregard of grouping and affinities. But it had not been serious—though it certainly had not been festive—when boating and racing men found themselves in company with scholars who did not share their tastes. It was serious when the elect of the county and the diocese were confronted with the leading grocers and scriveners of Salisbury; and what made it more serious, was that the author of the edict moved sublimely unconscious through it all, leaving wife and secretaries to cope with and reconcile the jarring elements.

My last recollection of the Bishop dates from a time after the first Mrs. Wordsworth's death and his second marriage. A party of us were bicycling through the New Forest and we came to Salisbury on the Saturday afternoon. I said that we must pay our respects, but was left to do so by myself and found (to my amusement, I fear) the Bishop gravely concerned because we were bicycling on after morning service next day. That evening his Secretary came down to the White Hart Inn, with something very like a grin, and said he had been deputed to urge us to abandon our project: and when I gave him the sort of answer he expected, the grin emphasized itself. He said we would at any rate attend by deputy, for the bishop had issued a special order that all his household should be present at the service immediately after luncheon, to hear the missionary sermon from which we were running away.

I find myself being led back from far off impressions of the Oxford which I didn't really like, to more recent appreciation. There has been a change, and nothing expresses it better than to compare Then and Now in the persons of Dean

Liddell and the present Dean of Christ Church. I wonder if Dr. Liddell was more than a façade ; for, surely, nobody was ever so majestic as he looked. It was impossible to see him without thinking of his dictionary ; he walked the streets like a tall quarto. To-day, Dr. Whyte's small, merry, informal presence is of course merely camouflage to disguise an intimidating weight of biblical scholarship—but I very definitely prefer the more modern type.

Ladies were of course incomparably fewer in the eighties—and the more appreciated. The admitted beauty of the University was Miss Kitchin, daughter of the scholar who afterwards became Dean of Durham. I first met her on a bolting horse, which came furiously at me and another man as we walked towards Godstow. However, the big, hard-mouthed brute pulled up most amiably when his bridle was caught : and we restored her to the cavaliers who came galloping after. We had a touching recognition scene, some time later, when I went to lunch with her people—friends of my O'Brien relations. A romantic mind wrought so far as to make me attend a concert where she was playing the violin, an exercise which greatly became her. But shortly after she married the man who played that duet with her and I never again in my life went to a concert of my own free will.

Other ornaments of the Oxford of the eighties were the Misses Liddell, one of whom was the original of Alice in Wonderland. I think Tenniel must have seen her, for, if you consider, the Alice of his pictures would grow up into something almost as majestic as Dean Liddell himself—and that is what the Misses Liddell did. Then there were the daughters of Dr. Bright (the Master of University who quarrelled with Morris), three short, dark, jolly-faced young ladies with devastating eyes. But all these local celebrities were totally eclipsed by the advent of two lovely Americans. Their name was McCall, and we understood that they owned a delicacy then widely advertised as Paysandu Ox-tongues. They were said to be rich and they certainly were good to

look at, and they were among the pioneers of that invading host which has subjugated so much of Europe. They had the American woman's pretty ways, and her apparent passion for knowledge. Oxford in those days probably did not know how many thousands there were in reserve, just as good-looking, just as perfectly turned out, and just as flattering in their eagerness for information. At all events these fore-runners swept the board. It was currently reported that on one afternoon the Vice-Chancellor (Jowett), the Dean of Christ Church (Liddell) and the Public Orator (Merry) met—not by pre-arrangement—on the doorstep of these ladies, looked at each other, silently summed up the situation, and by mutual impulse returned to their abodes without paying the call. They felt that there should be limits to the bulk of any bouquet.

Nowadays I do not believe that any two sisters, however rich or beautiful or sympathetic, could have such a triumph. There are too many competitors and no man old or young in the University need feel himself athirst for feminine society. Women share the life of the place—and, for my part, I think, so much the better. Certainly, so much the better for the young women of all sorts who resort there. Even nuns are to be found amongst them, yet at one notable disadvantage. In my time we went on foot from lecture to lecture, and from Worcester to Magdalen or Keble to Christ Church is ten minutes walking or near it, and compassionate allowance for the time of transit was made by lecturers. But since the transit came to be on bicycles (in my day only one man at B.N.C. rode a bicycle and it was counted the mark of a smug) unfortunate nuns in their robes turn up panting, to find the lecturer already in full swing and the short-skirted under-graduettes, with bicycles parked outside, busy taking notes. Nuns do not bicycle

In short, changes are uncountable, but on the whole changes are superficial; and Oxford goes on being the extreme characteristic expression of English life.

That was brought home to me the other day by its effect on a most accomplished Frenchman. Abel Chevalley knows England and the English so well that his book on the English novel is a social no less than a literary criticism of the first rank ; but although the Clarendon Press published him years ago, he had never been to Oxford till he went to spend a week-end at All Souls—where one finds the quintessence of Oxford's sublime disregard for obvious utilities. Chevalley is one of the best talkers I ever met, but I never heard him talk as that evening when he came back. This college where there were no undergraduates—its domestic luxury of the old beautiful Chapel, with century on century of mould on its vaultings—the Common-room, with its community ranging in age from twenty-two to eighty and upwards—all the elaborate and sumptuous ceremonial dinner—the duty specially laid on the youngest Fellow of supervising the bringing up of the wine (a touch that specially endeared All Souls to the ex-Mayor of a town in the Vouvray district) the talk in antique rooms till far into the morning, and next day breakfast and lunch in surroundings just as beautiful, and just as sumptuous, with the young : all this made an extraordinary appeal to one who was a typical product of the bare, severe, rigid French university system, which turns out so many Chevalleys. Knowing England and admiring it as he does, he could see that a country which in all matters is guided by instinct and tradition, rather than by reasoning capable of expression in abstract words, has evolved somehow an institution which makes experience of youth spent among the choicest treasures of a rich nation the crown of that nation's training ; which does not merely provide beauty and historic associations for the young to look at, but gives them these to use and handle for a period. More particularly, Chevalley, believing that a race advances not by change in its mass but by the multiplication of select individuals, felt, I think, that for England, being what England is, it was well to maintain these examples of costly life,

accessible to all picked brains, because experience of such life is part of the best education for an Englishman.

But it does not follow that he will prefer Oxford for his son's education ; and I for my part am not sure that it is the best place for a young Irishman to learn in.

CHAPTER III

DUBLIN OF THE 'EIGHTIES

PROBABLY the reason why Oxford meant less to me than to most young men lay in my contact with another university. My first long vacation was spent, partly in Devonshire with Herbert Read, and the rest in Derry with excursions back once more to fish in Donegal. But in that autumn of 1883, my father was appointed Archbishop King's lecturer in T.C.D. the second post in the Divinity School—Dr. Salmon being the Regius Professor. Our family moved to Dublin, settled into Thorndale, a house at the corner of Temple Road, far out in the suburbs, and only about an hour's walk across the fields to St. Columba's.

Henceforward, my father could gratify to the full his love for the society of young men. For nearly thirty years all the students of the Divinity School passed under his most friendly eyes ; and there were always some whom in particular he made his companions and brought constantly to our home. I remember the present Primate of Ireland, Dr. D'Arcy, there, and Archbishop Bernard, now Provost of Trinity, was a close friend from those days on. But my father's choice of companions was by no means limited to the Divinity School ; and the first among them was T. W. Rolleston, then beginning his career as a man of letters.

Rolleston had married young, being a man of some private means, and was then living in Dublin, keeping up his connection with Trinity. For Dublin University, in the capital, and the very heart of it, retains contact naturally

with its men for some years after they have graduated: the debating societies and literary clubs hold them, the Long Vacation cricket team prolongs their association with the College Park, and the whole society of the place has a mixture of these seniors—many of whom supplement their other work by a little coaching in college.

Rolleston would have been conspicuous anywhere by his tall figure and grave beauty; and he had the prestige of a poet, for he had won the Vice-Chancellor's Prize, which corresponds to the Newdigate. We all however regarded him simply as an able man who could write verse, and we certainly never expected that any of his work would go down to posterity. We were wrong: for one poem of his, *The Dead of Clonmacnoise*, holds its place more securely in the anthologies than almost anything that has been written in my time. But the preoccupations of that time ran against poetry. Ireland during my undergraduate days—and indeed till I reached thirty—was in the full blast of a revolution, partly political, but still more social, because it affected the land. Of course, to literary young men, it was the political side that made appeal. Rolleston interested us because, being older, he was in a position to take a part: and he was strongly Nationalist. Parnell's party was looking for recruits, and men of good brains would, we knew, be more than commonly acceptable if they came from the Protestant camp. But to accept service under Parnell meant accepting the party pledge, which bound all members to speak, vote and act according to the decision of the majority. Rolleston and one or two others of his standing—notably Charles Hubert Oldham—definitely decided against submitting to this sacrifice of their free judgment. But they were anxious to serve, and a Protestant Home Rule Association was started at this time—Oldham, I think, being its chief promoter. It did not accomplish much, but it held meetings and, its membership not being numerous, there was some attempt at interruption. This however was dealt with.

In these days, two medical students, Tom and Jack Myles, were prominent in the boxing world. I do not think Jack Myles entered the political arena. He is chiefly remembered for having won a prize offered by the once illustrious Sullivan to any man who would stand up against him for four rounds without being knocked out. Jack's chest and shoulders instantly suggested a gorilla, but his brother, now Sir Thomas, and a reputed surgeon, was less formidably noticeable. Tom Myles might have passed you in the street without attracting notice, unless indeed an observant eye detected that his spread of shoulders made him look less tall than he was. At all events, Tom Myles was in those days a Protestant Home Ruler, and sat unnoticeably among the audience, a quiet young man with no appearance of emotion on his broad handsome face. So he sat, until interruptions became vexatious, and then, rising quietly, he walked down the gangway, paused for a moment and then walked on to the door with an interrupter under each arm: came back for a fresh load and disposed of two more: came back again, but found no interrupters and resumed his seat.

Many a time at later periods of my life have I wished for somebody with the moral and physical qualities of Tom Myles. But in those days I was not thinking of the practical necessities of an Irish political career.

It is a curious fact that neither I nor, I think, any of the young men with whom I associated, ever went to the political meetings held by the Land League, or its successor the National League. Once at the Contemporary Club, which assembled on Saturdays, in Oldham's rooms over tea and barnbrack, I met Davitt; but he, I think, at that time was not in Parliament. The connecting link for us with Irish nationalism was the romantic figure of old John O'Leary—one of the chief founders of the Fenian movement. He served five years' of the penal servitude to which he was sentenced in 1865; then followed ten years exile in Paris, before he was permitted to return.

Probably it was Rolleston who introduced me to him,

though it was not hard for a grandson of Smith O'Brien to attract his friendship. But Rolleston saw more of O'Leary than any of the rest of us, and since he also went about a great deal with my father, there were odd confusions: for the Professor of Theology and the old rebel were easily mistaken for each other. Both of them were lean, tallish figures with a slight stoop, high aquiline nose and great beard, with its dark brown grizzled: and since O'Leary always dressed in black, it was hard to blame a crowd on the Dublin quays if they cheered lustily when my father with Rolleston sitting beside him drove by on an outside car. And when J. B. Yeats, father of the poet, exhibited his portrait of O'Leary in the Hibernian Academy, many of my father's friends, who had not consulted their catalogues, congratulated us on having such an excellent likeness of him. In front of that portrait a meeting between the two was finally arranged: and I remember well O'Leary's opening observation after they had shaken hands. "Well now, Dr. Gwynn, in view of this likeness that is said to exist between us, all I can say is that I hope neither of us will ever do anything that may in any way compromise the other."

It would never have surprised any of us if that eagle-eyed, eagle-beaked old man had for a second time incurred the law's penalties; but in no other way would he "compromise" the most scrupulous. In no keeping could honour have been more safe. Indeed, perhaps his influence did much to keep the young men of that group out of the agrarian revolution, which appealed far too directly to the Irish peasant's material interest for O'Leary's taste: and the old Fenian denounced again and again the outrages which accompanied agitation. Also, he declared fiercely against dynamite. There are certain things, he said, which must not be done, even for freedom.

But he never definitely sided against the agrarian revolution, as did another man of the older Nationalism—P. J. Smyth, one of the most eloquent orators that came

from the Young Ireland tradition. He, who had been associated with Smith O'Brien's movement, opened up a correspondence with my mother, and I saw him more than once—a frail, grey-bearded old man, passionate in his denunciation of the land campaign, which seemed to him a policy of robbery.

His voice in those years created no echo, though no doubt his pamphlets were circulated widely by the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, an organization in which Smith O'Brien's eldest son, Edward, was very 'active. But somewhere about 1885 John O'Leary took me to call on one who, to my youthfulness, seemed to be a visitor from the tomb, for he had been the chief organizer of that movement which my grandfather headed in 1848. This was Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, founder and editor of the *Nation* newspaper which from 1843 on exercised a power only second to O'Connell's. Tried for high treason in 1848, after the rising, he escaped sentence by repeated disagreements of the jury, and after some years went to Australia, where he became Prime Minister of Victoria.

I went with immense curiosity about the man who nearly forty years before had been deep in revolutionary counsel with my mother's father, and found that John O'Leary had brought also a blonde, buxom young woman, then quite unknown to me, who was evidently thrilled with reverential anticipation. I wonder what Katherine Tynan really thought that day of that old man. I, for my part, thought him, morally, far less impressive than O'Leary: but then the constitutional agitator is never so picturesque as the idealist who believes in the sword. And there was no mistaking in Gavan Duffy's talk the brain of a long-practised politician—if indeed statesman be not the right name for that builder of the Australian Commonwealth.

He spoke of my grandfather with a touch of humour. "The truth is, Smith O'Brien regarded himself as the rightful King of Ireland." And, no doubt, a strong feeling of the right to leadership vested in the lineal representatives of

Brian Boru helped to put that respectable country gentleman in "the gap of danger"; and it must have been supported by the traditional respect among the Irish peasantry for such lineage which existed even in this century.

But it is true also that Gavan Duffy and his colleagues of the *Nation* played their part in nourishing this pride of race. The *Nation* began that revival of interest in the Gaelic past, and that spreading of Gaelic spirit through the English tongue, which has been carried so much further in our days. Indeed, Gavan Duffy gave a new impetus to that process, even in his old age.

I thought him a completely worn-out force when I saw him that day: and apparently others were of that opinion, for when, some months later, he proposed to re-marry, the lady's friends warned her that she would be only engaging herself as sick nurse to an old man. What happened was that she died in her fourth child-bed, leaving him for the third time a widower. It fell to the lot of one of her children to sign the Treaty which created the Free State. Sir Charles Gavan Duffy himself did not die till 1903: and in the period after his return from Australia he was closely associated with Rolleston in publishing or republishing a series of cheap books on Irish subjects. The "New Irish Library" was of service, though like every other literary venture in Ireland it had to contend with the reluctance of the Irish people to spend money on print. Newspapers in Ireland are bought, but they are carefully handed from one reader to another, and it is rare to see a man leave one in a tram or train: in this respect, our people are admirably frugal. So far as concerns the purchase of books, we are a nation of abstainers with a few drunkards: but the bookworm in Ireland is almost invariably an amasser of old books. There was never a harder country for a literary man to make his living out of: and the trait follows our people to America, where they are comparatively well off and furnish their houses with everything—except books.

This fact—from an author's point of view regrettable—

is recognized by those whom it concerns. At one period of my life I used to advise an American publisher, and kept pressing on him works which by their nature could not hope for a sympathetic reception in England. For instance, Mr. Buckley's *Croppies Lie Down*, a powerful story of the Wexford rising in 1798, was unflattering to the British soldiery; but that was no reason why the Americans, and still more the American Irish, should not buy it. But my publisher declared that there was no purchasing public for it; and he was right.

Later, I was to some degree concerned in starting the firm of Maunsel and Company in Ireland and did my utmost to develop the sale of books in Ireland itself. But in my wanderings I reached the town of Ballaghaderreen and in the big shop over which Mr. Dillon still at least nominally presides, I was authorized to interview the manager about setting up a sale of Irish books. One work in particular seemed particularly hopeful, but it cost two shillings. Two shillings! No one would give the like of that for a book in Ballaghaderreen. On my way through the shop my eye was caught by a case of pipes with a special apparatus, highly recommended: they cost seven and sixpence apiece. "Have you much demand for them?" I asked, and was told that they sold very well. That would be an intelligible expenditure. But that anybody should pay two shillings—let alone seven and sixpence—for a book was apparently unthinkable in County Mayo.

And yet away out in the west, in a parish so remote that Ballaghaderreen is metropolitan by comparison, I have sat in the house of a National schoolmaster and seen his shelves filled with books of great price, some his own purchasing, and some, more precious, inscribed as the gift of their authors: for this man was a scholar of repute in the Gaelic world. And I have seen elsewhere a much sadder sight, when an old blind man sat among the wreckage of piled up volumes—among them a superbly bound set of proceedings of the Irish Parliament—lamenting because

careless generations after him were destroying the store that he could no longer use or protect.

How far all this has altered now I cannot be sure : there are more bookshops than there used to be in Irish towns, but the good bookshops have gone down in the world. One thing however is clear. The output of writing in Ireland has increased immensely, and the standard of it has improved out of all comparison : it has gained a rank of its own in the world of letters ; and the men to whom this change is mainly attributable belonged to the group with which I associated in those days, while the Parnell movement was at its height.

They were not in Parnell's movement : they stood deliberately and consciously apart from it ; but no doubt the slowly gathered force which drove the land revolution pushed them also in their different ways ; and they did not begin to count in the life of Ireland until the revolutionary movement had spent its first impetus, and the ebb of the land war left a kind of loneliness and expectancy, in which other stirrings began to be watched for and listened to.

The two moving forces were, of course, W. B. Yeats and Douglas Hyde. The others who surrounded them had chiefly value as a seedbed for the new ideas. Many men who never agreed with Yeats as to the direction of literary effort, or with Hyde in his Gaelic propaganda, yet helped to spread their influence, because personal contact had made them aware that Yeats and Hyde were not negligible persons. For example, Andrew Cherry, afterwards Lord Chief Justice, had, I should say, very little sympathy with either of them, but he never lacked interest in their work : it was alive for him because he knew them personally. Cæsar Litton Falkiner, a far keener literary intelligence, again, was on principle opposed to the Nationalist movement in all its expressions ; but if one had wanted a book by Yeats or Hyde Falkiner would be far more likely to have it than one of their professed admirers. What is more, his own literary work, studies of Irish history undertaken from the

Anglo-Irish point of view, yet shew the influence of these other men, because Falkiner is constantly alive to the fact that there existed throughout the eighteenth century a Gaelic Ireland, cut off from the ruling race but not on that account insignificant. That marks the distinction between his work and Lecky's: he was aware of certain things which the greater historian missed.

I have spoken of a group, and perhaps the word is misleading; there was no conscious alliance. But all the men whom I met knew one another—in the main through association in Trinity. My tie with them lay through my two cousins, W. F. Stockley, now Professor of Literature at Cork, and his brother John, now Rector of Wolverhampton. We used all to meet a good deal in walking parties—for at that time the bicycle had not become a craze, as it was before it passed into a general article of use. But there was a focal centre quite near my new home: Edward Dowden lived only three or four houses from us in Temple Road, and on Sundays the young men gathered there. Dowden did, I think, great things for my generation in Ireland, not so much by his writing or teaching as by his personal atmosphere and outlook. Urbanity describes him better than any other word, and he was not like any usual English or Irish type, but very much like the continental savant or scholar. Even his beard and his glasses had something uninsular about them. I have known Frenchmen like him, but none quite so suave, so constantly unruffled, so incapable of turbulent speech. South Germany breeds professors of his type, and although he read French widely and constantly, the dominant influences in his mind were, I think, German—as they were in those of his masters, Emerson and Carlyle. It was probably through Carlyle that he got to Walt Whitman, of whom he was an apostle—a hard thing to reconcile with French influence. But what he really represented to us was culture in general; he believed in the use of reading to form conduct and character. His colleague, Professor Mahaffy, far more widely read than he,

far more widely acquainted with men and countries, would have adopted Bacon's phrase that "studies serve for delight, ornament and ability." He learned immensely because learning amused him, because it was worth decorations, and because it gave him weapons and tools in the contest of life : but as for allowing his course of life to be deflected by his reading, Mahaffy would no more have thought of that than would his opponent and rival, Tyrrell. Dowden's more serious mind made study a discipline of life. His attitude was incomparably less traditional, and more informed by his reading and reflection, than that of the other distinguished men who then made Trinity illustrious. Dowden was, in the European sense, more of a Liberal than they ; more of the modern world ; he was, in short, more of a philosopher and less of a mere scholar. I do not mean that he preached philosophy at us : it emanated from his conversation : and doubtless part of his philosophy was shown in his practice of keeping intellectually open house. Most of the men I remember there were Nationalists ; and some of them, as I have said already, set their mark deep on the nation. But when Home Rule became a live issue, Dowden himself shook off his academic seclusion and fought it with a cold intensity. Yet the door was not closed on anyone because of his opinions, nor was the welcome less cordial to the most outspoken Nationalist. Rolleston used to come there, and J. F. Taylor a Northern Protestant Home Ruler, too independent to accept the party pledge, but rising fast in repute by his eloquence at the bar, and author of one of the best volumes in Gavan Duffy's New Ireland series (*The Life of Owen Roe O'Neill*). Death cut him off untimely : he had by general consent the most trenchant brain in these gatherings.

But the man whom I remember as Dowden's most ardent disciple was T. W. Lyster, to whom a memorial has just been erected in the National Library, of which he was then already a servant. It would be ungrateful for any Irish man of letters to forget the one who made the most

hospitable library that I have ever known. Lyster was not incapable of humour, no one laughed louder at a joke ; but the sense of humour was never an inhibition for him, and his simplicity was always artless, and sometimes laughable. I remember his telling me solemnly how he had taken his sisters out for a country walk the day before they entered for an examination and made them jump ditches. " It sends the bile through the system." In these early days, perhaps we laughed more at Lyster and loved him less : he was an echo that not only repeated Dowden's views but multiplied the repetition ; and echo, adding too much enthusiasm, may become a bore. But he brought his faith in culture to good purpose when he set himself to make every book in his library easily at command of any and every reader, but more especially of the young : and the place grew to be the chief haunt of students, especially for those of the National University. Or if any recognized worker, myself for instance, asked for a book, it was fetched speedily, and while one worked, attendants would appear from time to time bringing other volumes which " Mr. Lyster thought you might like to look at " ; and often the new volume brought new light. The larger world will realize something of his quality when it is said that Mr. Hagberg Wright of the London Library was trained by him. In Ireland the monument to him was fittingly inaugurated by our chief man of letters. Yeats said with justice that Lyster was " a scholar in literature " ; no man ever prized literature for itself and for its effect on life more highly. But Yeats added that in the far-off years that I now write of, Lyster had done him the practical service of criticizing a poet's early work. Even in those days, it was no small tribute to have such counsel sought.

For already, from the very first, Yeats fixed attention. In his own reminiscences, he has attributed to himself in youth the desire to draw eyes, and to look the poet's part. Yet I remember him since we were both nineteen ; and though manifestly enough he looked unlike anyone else,

and dressed unlike anyone else, I never but once suspected him of affectation, and that was after he had established himself in London and for a while became spruce—almost as if he wished to look like Richard Le Gallienne. My memory accuses him then of a small and even foppish black moustache. But in the eighties, when he was a long, sallow wisp of a lad, frequently with black locks of hair sticking out through a broken straw hat, his appearance seemed perfectly natural. We knew he was a poet, and we knew that poets were traditionally careless about their dress: but we did not really concern ourselves about his appearance. Somehow or other, before ever he had published a line, he had convinced us that he was a poet who would count. He had personality: no poet ever had more.

Actually, his first publication was in the Dublin University Review which Rolleston started about 1885, and for many years I preserved a record of the numbers which included his *Island of Statues*. *Mosada*, another early work, appeared there too. Except one lyric about the fairy child, nothing of this early work is preserved in his collected poems: and I do not think that these first things took us by storm. But we adhered to our conviction that the future lay with him.

Perhaps his father helped to confirm the impression. The Yeats family have always believed in each other, and though in late years many have praised Jack Yeats' paintings none else ever did so with such conviction and force as his brother, the poet. But it was more surprising to find a father so confident in the genius of his son—and without the least suggestion of clannish partisanship. John Butler Yeats always expressed strong opinions, but he could lay down the law without the least shade of arrogance. He was indeed one of the most delightful talkers that Ireland ever produced, and he joined that easy charm, which a well-bred Irish gentleman so often possesses, to familiarity with all the talk of the studios and cénacles. The bar had been his profession till he was thirty; and probably he took up

painting too late to acquire that mastery of the technique after which he aimed. For he did value technique supremely. I remember his saying that we were all absurd to set such value on the pre-Raphaelite work of Millais when the painter's real quality was to be found in his later manner with its easy mastery of brushwork. Possibly in our generation John Yeats' gift of vision might have been better bestowed ; for, in the rare instances when his work succeeded, he got the very soul of his sitter. But nothing would stop him from painting and repainting till the object was blurred. I am not sure that his son, the poet, has not inherited an unwise proneness to retouch.

Hyde was naturally often seen at Dowden's house, for his studies had lain in modern literature, of which Dowden was the professor. He was less of a boy than Yeats, as I first remember them : the gap between twenty-two and nineteen is wider than that between thirty and forty. And of all the men I have known, Hyde seems to have changed least. There was already the heavy drooping dark brown moustache, which hid the mouth, and the high cheekbones wide apart, which gave him a Slav aspect : and already there was the friendly, ingratiating speech. First and last, he was always " the deludhering Douglas ! " But there come back to me some phrases of a discussion, such as often arose in those days, about the war between landlord and tenant and the things that were justifiable in it : and suddenly there blazed out in Hyde's talk the Western peasant's ferocity when land is touched. He, of course, was of no peasant stock ; his father, a country parson in Roscommon, had English ancestors ; but the son had grown up associating intimately with the Irish-speaking folk whose mind as well as whose tongue he learned, whose literature he made known, and who gave him the name by which he became known wherever Irishmen are scattered — *An Craoibhin Aoibhinn*, The Pleasant Little Branch. A slip of another stock had been grafted on the Gael, and the Gael knew it.

In those days my cousin Stockley was going out to a

professorship in Canada, and there was a farewell dinner, at which Hyde was called on and sang a song in Irish. It was the first time that I heard Irish from the lips of an educated man. To-day, there is not a schoolchild in Ireland but is learning the language, and Irish—though it is perhaps even less spoken as a native tongue—is as widely known as French among the generation that has grown up in our country. That is, in the main, Hyde's work; but by no means the whole of his work. One may say that the modern Irish revolution came out of the Divinity School of Trinity College; for a theological student Hyde was, though he never passed into orders; and the Gaelic League came from Hyde, and from the Gaelic League came the movement that was called *Sinn Féin*.

I have known these two men, Hyde and Yeats, for well over forty years, and have to some extent worked with them in their purposes, and I think both would rank me among their friends: yet I have never had at all such intimate acquaintance with either as with many Englishmen and some Frenchmen. There is a great reserve in Irish character, due very largely to the fact that Irishmen seldom lack subjects to converse about, and are not driven to produce their own innermost feelings as a topic.

I find this true in looking back on my relations with the household where I made in those days the friendship that I valued most.

It was the home of old William Osborne, the animal painter. He and his wife were people who had married late and after very long attachment. She always withdrew herself; but it was a friendly withdrawal, a shyness with no hostility. She liked to sit and watch with her great grey-brown eyes, that even then were full of melancholy except when some reflection of gaiety lit them: later, they kept their beauty after sight had left them and after tragedy had flooded in. Her husband was a charming companion for the young: wise, shrewd and observant and keeping the old world courtesy. Modern criticism would count him craftsman

rather than artist ; his work had no charm of colour and its merit was that of being able to represent what he saw and knew and loved. Whatever came into his pictures, men, women or inanimate objects, came merely as accessory to dogs and horses, for whose points and expression and character he had the completest feeling. Yet once in the gallery at Kilkenny Castle I found myself attracted by a modern picture ; and it was one of his—showing the Lord Ormonde of that day sitting loosely but competently on his big loose-built hunter ; I have never seen a canvas on which the sympathy between horse and man was better rendered.

Memories of his talk make me realize that forty years ago everybody was saying, as they are saying to-day, that the Irish gentry were ruined and the good times were past. It was certainly true that after the land war those who used to commission him to paint their horses and hounds gave no more such commissions : art is the first luxury on which we economize. He must indeed already have been feeling the pinch sorely and been thankful that his sons were off his hands.

That household was very proud of its sons, and by good right. The elder of them, Charles Osborne, now Rector of Wallsend, had been the leading person in the debating societies at Trinity, where his power of putting original thought into a tumbling rush of eloquence had given him mastery. He was in 1884 a curate somewhere in England—his inclinations pushing him outside the rather narrow limits permitted to clergy of the Irish Church. When from time to time he came over, it was a festival for all his friends. People who did not willingly go to sermons went to hear him preach, and those who had the chance went wherever he could be heard talking. Walking parties were many at these times, but walking had to be adapted to the possibilities of discourse. It was talk mostly of theology—not so much theology of the clerics as of the laymen, who were concerned to offer substitutes for it—Matthew Arnold for instance : “ I can’t worship a majestic vacuum ” is one phrase of Charles Osborne’s

that comes back to me. But he had a deal to say about the humours and the agonies of parochial work—and later, when he had joined Dolling at Landport, about the passionate cult of ritual; especially concerning one thurifer who would continually slip over to the Roman service and come back with new ideas and demands for more incense

His letters, of which I have a bundle, speculate on the portion of Purgatory due to vicars of the Church of England “a doctrine very full of comfort.” He himself would “rather like to be a vicar,” but hoped he would have enough pluck to “burst through the red tape with which the position is generally surrounded.” There was however in Dolling’s parish “no stiff and narrow ecclesiasticism and, as yet, no vicar’s wife!”

The other son, Walter Osborne, had followed his father’s trade, and when I met him was just back from a year’s painting at Quimperlé. Some of my friends have still pictures of that time by him—rather tight, in the manner of the Antwerp school, in which he had studied; and his characteristic and beautiful colour had not yet developed in his work. I remember in him from the first the long red drooping moustache, the long eyes with a trick of half closing, and the long oval of the face. He thickened a little as he grew to middle age, and baldness came on: but first and last he was a man of great physical vigour and dexterity, and he had that loose freedom of movement which often goes with men who are called left-handed but are really ambidextrous. He painted with the right hand habitually but he was one of the most naturally gifted left hand bowlers I ever saw.

But in a way the central figure of that household was the youngest child, a girl so vivid that she almost had beauty, and so spirited that she completely over-rode a congenital lameness which in another might have been a deformity. It was in reality she who did the honours of the house: her father and mother were merely sympathetic and welcoming presences, while she gave life to their many gatherings.

There was always music, not very serious, I think : and certainly one of the popular features was the singing of Irish comic songs by Arthur Patton, a rising barrister who in those days had great vogue as a speaker against Home Rule on English platforms. The kind of Irishman that fills the bill for an Englishman's idea of what an Irishman should be has always been against Home Rule : Lord Charles Beresford came nearer to the type than anyone I ever knew in the House of Commons. When the Unionist Alliance employed Arthur Patton to speak for them for thirty shillings a day (that was the tariff in those days) they got great value for their money, and I have no doubt enjoyed his meetings to the full. And the rest of us had not been taught as yet that it was unpatriotic to be amused by the songs which Robert Martin and Percy French were writing. I remain impenitent and think that what is now called "Anglo-Irish" humour, when at its broadest, as in Robert Martin's *Ballyhooly*, is very good fun indeed, and at its subtlest, as in Maria Edgeworth or in much of Lever, or in the work which Robert Martin's sister, Martin Ross, did with Edith Somerville, is as good a humour as the modern world can show. As for its fidelity to life, no one who has lived in the west of Ireland, and, above all, no one who has taken part in Irish politics, is going to be convinced that the "stage Irishman" as Irish authors represented him is not a legitimate caricature. The truth has been that people took it for a complete representation. A man of genius sees deeper, and Max Beerbohm, just after the Irish Revolution, suggested "rebel" Ireland, set over against the "loyalist" north, with all the intensity of caricature at its best. The Celtic Ireland of his *Two Lovely Sisters* was a fierce unkempt, untamed young lass, dangerous as a tiger cat, bristling with hate : the big stockish female who faced her with a huge broom-handle embodied more than a few of the qualities of Sir James Craig.

These two types between them show Ireland at its worst and its most divided : and in 1921, when they were drawn,

the artist's work had ample justification. But for all that there is between them a real Ireland, sane and friendly, loving and lovable, good to live in or die in, to live for or die for : and in my memories of it there is no household by which I would have rather seen it judged than the one of which I have been writing.

The Osbornes were Protestant Irish : Anglo-Irish, if you will : but in any quarter of the world that knows Ireland, they would have been recognized as Irish. They had the hospitality that goes with a most frugal way of living : and they had the Irish charm which is so hard to define. Old Mr. Osborne was as good an example of the old-fashioned Irish gentleman as I ever met : he never talked to you without giving some turn of humour to his discourse, though he was none of your loud laughers or retailers of broad jokes. In half an hour, you would feel as if you had known him all your life : and yet in ten years, he would never have burdened you with an embarrassing confidence. His wife, perhaps because she was very shy, kept less well the secret of her anxieties : it seems to me now that there was always the intensity of a tragic doom about her. A dramatist of these years has been disclosing the intensity and power of mother-love as it is seen in Irishwomen, and Miss Allgood's acting of " Juno " makes me feel a kinship between what she portrayed and this other so different woman. In Mrs. Osborne's mother-love, all was for pride ; but with the just pride of her brilliant children, there seemed to go a passionate anxiety, only too prophetic.

Of them, oddly enough, the one whose adult life lay out of Ireland seems to me the most obviously Irish ; no Englishman ever had the tumbling profusion of metaphor, the perpetual interplay of jest and earnest, which were in Charles Osborne's talk. His brother, the painter, had very strong affinities with much that is English. Certainly in those first years when I knew him, choice always took him to England—largely no doubt because there he could more easily get other men to live and work along with him ;

but also because the red roofs and the brown greys of English landscapes appealed to him as the blues and greens of Ireland did not. He liked quietness, but he liked a homely quietness, and he had no use for the scenic; the grassy downs said more to him than our purple hills. Left to himself, I think he would have done all his work in England; and certainly, left to himself, he would never have painted a portrait.

His life, while he had freedom to choose, was spent in remote parts of Berkshire, Worcestershire, Oxfordshire; later, he went down to the tideways and sloblands—Romney in Kent, Wallingford in Suffolk. Winter drove him home, for it was his usage to work entirely in the open air, and perhaps his main objection to Ireland lay in the weather, which gave too small a proportion of days he could paint in. As a rule, he clubbed with two or three other men and lived in some local inn or farmhouse, always frugal and hardy. One summer, he told me, had got his board and lodging down to twelve shillings a week; but he did not go back there; it was too Spartan, and probably not clean, and he was fastidious. But his whole life was in the open. His school believed in painting what you saw while you saw it and not trusting to memory; perhaps that is why he often failed to disengage the essential. Long after he was dead, Clutton Brock, looking at a twilight study of his, said that the picture had got tangled up with the paint; and it was a true criticism of much of his work. It very seldom had the quality which corresponds to a carrying voice; you could only see it from one angle or one distance. But he became rapidly the most admired painter in Ireland, and no one grudged him his success. I think there was never a man more modest and more unselfish.

Yet in those days Nathaniel Hone was exhibiting yearly work that kept up the tradition of the Barbizon School with which he had worked. We never knew his worth until Lane brought over a group of the Barbizon pictures—the nucleus of our Municipal Gallery—and exhibited two

Hones among them. Picked as Lane would pick them, the Irish painter's works held their own. Nowadays everybody wants to buy Hone ; but few painters have so varying a gift. Still when it was at its best, there was weight and power in its heavy rhythm and a sombre vitality which exceeds the best that Osborne ever did. But in those days, no one was aware of Hone : it was only in his later years that Osborne himself, I think, began to value the elder man at his worth.

The rival to him in those days was a woman—Miss Sarah Purser : and if the two had followed their natural bent, no one would have thought of comparing them. But when Osborne took to portraiture, the comparison forced itself. He could render the quality of draperies and the flush of colour on a face : but she, at her best, set the living person on canvas. Hers was a purely intellectual talent, and went with one of the keenest minds and keenest tongues of all Ireland. Her studio at Harcourt Terrace was a place where a young man thought it a great privilege to have his wits sharpened.

There I met for the first time the lady whose advent in Dublin made a great stir among us, for Maud Gonne did not frequent the ordinary dance-giving society, but lived entirely among the literary and political young men, as enfranchised young women would do quite naturally to-day. But, forty years ago, her way of life would have excited some comment, even had she been plain and poor. Since she was by our standards rich, and immensely tall, and of the most surpassing beauty, there was a buzz of gossip, through which she moved, amused rather than indifferent. There was a tale of her inviting all her friends to meet the chaperone who was arriving from Paris, and then coming in with a small grey monkey on her arm. At all events, I can swear to the sensation she made when she walked the streets with a wolfhound beside her. But the flush and blossom of her youth, it seems to me, veiled the real beauty which only disclosed itself when the superb lines of her face took emphasis. She was the most beautiful woman I have ever

seen, not in her youth, but in her maturity—even when she was on the edge of fifty.

I think too that no woman has been more nobly celebrated in verse. The lank wisp of a boy whom I used to meet at Dowden's wrote about her poem after poem, which are some of the most passionate, and least sensuous, love poetry in the world: from early manhood to late middle age, she recurs as his central theme. Her name must be often in these pages. Many things that she did were against my judgment of what was good for Ireland, and I have often laboured to oppose her influence; but none of her acts ever seemed to me foreign to her high nature; and whoever did her service at any time earned an honour which I envy.

CHAPTER IV

ON MY OWN

IT has always been part of my nature never to lay plans far ahead (except indeed about fishing and these seldom come off); and so, according to my nature, I proceeded to my degree without the least idea of what I should do next. The same happens to a great number of young men every year at the English Universities and at the Irish. Continental parents interfere more actively in the careers of their sons just as in the marriages of their daughters—and on the whole I believe they are right. Among us in many cases the hereditary tendency settles it, but one thing at least was clear to me; I did not want to be a clergyman. As for suggestion of any sort, in any direction, of all men I have known, my father was the least disposed to show his wishes for the career of his children by any hint. He himself had been ruthlessly driven in boyhood, and he had, besides, a fine delicacy in respect for personal freedom.

Decision might have been postponed; for I had been elected to one of the Senior Hulmean scholarships at B.N.C., which provide £120 a year for three years on condition that the holder is pursuing his education. I had two years of it to run, and might for instance have gone on to a foreign university. But this idea never occurred to me, nor was it mooted. The only proposal I remember came from Dr. Wordsworth, who wanted me to take up Coptic. A Coptic scholar was needed and might (he said, when I raised the point) hope eventually to earn as much as £200 a year.

As for my own desires, they were negative. I was bored stiff with the academic way of life and I think my chief aim was to get out of Oxford, and on to something new. A fellowship would no doubt have pleased me, but I had no wish for staying up to read for one; besides, I counted very little on a degree that would justify the attempt. Looking back now, I see a spoilt and discontented young man—amazingly immature even for two and twenty. I did not even know how lucky I was when a delightful chance came my way through the kind intervention of Henry Butcher.

It was an invitation to go to France for a couple of months, as tutor to a young man, who after two years in a cavalry regiment had decided to give up the army and go to Cambridge. His father came down to see me while I was in the middle of the Greats exams., and I got back from the schools, after a three hours' paper, to find him waiting for me in my rooms. From his son I gathered later that I looked rather distraught, and I remember asking leave to put my head in a basin of cold water; but we settled things over lunch. I was to join his son at La Gruette, near Tours, as soon as I was through with my papers, and then come back for the *viva*.

That was my first introduction to France and no spot in my life is brighter as I look back along it. Yet I ought to be ashamed of myself, for it was the least conscientious form of pedagogy imaginable. All I had to do was to get my man through little-go and entrance at Trinity, and that took no doing at all: the only thing which might have bothered me was mathematics but he knew that subject much better than I. What I ought to have done I omitted—to put his name down for the exam.; so that in point of fact he did not pass little-go till the end of his first term.

But Seton Thomson and I became very good companions and friends, and that I think is what his father desired. And he had been admirably guided in his choice of a *pension*. That little village of St. Cyr, two or three kilometres from Tours across the Loire, is the place which Anatole France

chose to settle down in for his old age—a good sign that there is nothing more charmingly and characteristically French. Our hosts were two old people whose only child, their son, had married, and left them short of company in the little villa among their vineyards ; so they decided to take in young Englishmen. M. Crémière had been an ironmaster, but he had retired from business early with a competence after the French fashion, and lived philosophically while the women of his household saw to it that he—and we—lived on the best. He was an excellent talker, a great lover of talk, and he had the special charm which comes to good Frenchmen in old age. His wife was the soul of good nature and of good housewifery. Heavens, how we fed ! And there was a pretty niece who used to spend half the week with them and help Madame in her housekeeping—and us in our education ; and very good it was for us.

But I think that Seton Thomson and I improved our French more at a household in Tours which was hospitably open. An Irish gentleman, by profession a railway engineer, had come out there with his English wife in the service of the French railroads and his family of daughters had grown up French speaking by choice. They had a pleasant house and grounds and a tennis court, and tennis was anyhow our first reason for going there. It is odd to think, in these days of M. Borotra and Mlle. Lenglen, that a third class player such as I was (if that is not putting it too high) should have been a kind of phenomenon there. We met many of the French people from surrounding châteaux and the barracks, and they were very friendly, but (after the French fashion) did not ask us to their houses, we carrying no credentials. But we had our own sufficient society.

Of course I fell in love—and so did my pupil. The only thing to be said for me as a tutor is that I attached myself to the daughter who was not already engaged. Also, the only heart broken was mine : it remained in that state for months after I got back. But in the time I spent in Touraine I had got a pretty fair grip of the French language—for I

had fallen in love with that also ; and that passion lasted. I got instruction in French on the tennis court and on the picnic excursions which we used to organize to Amboise, Azay and such places, and in the evenings after dinner when we sat out in the garden. But all this was supplemented by lessons from a professor in Tours who was seriously a man of letters.

M. Messire was a journalist and passionately a politician, but by that I did not profit. It is almost incredible that any moderately intelligent youth could have been so ignorant of European affairs as I was. The year 1886 was an interesting time in the development of the Third Republic but for all I troubled about that, I might as well never have crossed the Channel. I just became vaguely aware that the regiment in which we had made friends at tennis was being ordered away because the authorities thought it too royalist and too popular in the châteaux. Old M. Crémière used to say—as I think the typical Frenchman has always said—that everything in France would be perfect if only there were no Government. The Government and Paris were the causes of all things evil, especially Paris—a corrupt place where people drink their coffee with milk. M. Messire was the other type of intelligent Frenchman, one who believes that salvation lies in a particular set of doctrines, and is preached by certain individuals. His old letters show me that he was “*Catholique Militant*” but if he talked politics to me I have forgotten them. He talked literature, though, as well as grammar over the essays I used to bring him. Some feeling for words made its way through my efforts in the unfamiliar medium ; and he was certainly the first human being who told me that I should be able to write. Months after I had gone away (for we continued to exchange letters) he wrote urging me in all seriousness to make literature my profession.

That was after I had failed in my first half-hearted venture. While I was at Tours, a competition for posts in the Civil Service was announced and I decided to enter.

I got my first in Greats (Madame Crémière celebrated the telegram announcing it with the Vouvray Mousseux and Chartreuse jaune, which were produced on birthdays); and of course so soon as my pupil went off to Cambridge I ought to have gone back to read with a crammer. But I stayed on another month—not finding it easy to tear myself from all the attractions: and I owe to that month a reminiscence of two real celebrities.

Among the half-dozen of us at La Gruette was George Bancroft, then a boy of sixteen, but already ridiculously like his father, both in looks and manners; the most middle-aged thing of his years imaginable. One fine morning, it was announced that his parents were to join him. They had just retired from the stage. Naturally, we were thrilled. I had seen them play, and what I remember is *Caste*; it would be strange indeed if we forgot that, for I saw the original company with Hare at his best. But admittedly Polly Eccles was the soul of it, and it was Polly Eccles who arrived. I never saw a nature so "subdued to what it worked in": no other actress I have met was so completely and admirably professional. The laugh which had exhilarated thousands rang through our little rooms: it was never too loud for them, but one was always aware that it would reach the farthest corner of pit and gallery. Whenever she left a room, it was not the shambling business of our ordinary comings and goings; she made her exit, a movement perfectly executed, and never without a parting glance to bestow on us the vanishing glimpse of her sunshine. I wish there were a better comparison: moon is too melancholy, stars too remote; sun, though I admit he is too big, conveys exhilaration. Perhaps it would be too much to say that, when she went, gaiety was withdrawn; but in any case, she used instinctively the right gesture to convey that this was so. And on the stage a thousand times, it had conveyed a reality.

These two people were in their own way perfect examples of an artistic tradition. He was off the stage exactly what

he was on it ; slow moving, debonair, courteous ; and he always liked to suggest, for the parts that he shone in, a somewhat limited intelligence, attended with a good heart, all the generosities of a gentleman—and a decided lack of humour. It was part of that part's simplicity that he should take very seriously his study of the French language and produce his dictations at déjeuner, to show us what faults he had made. Indeed, I have hardly come across anyone else so simple as these two veteran comedians.

It seems to me now that the difference between them and such modern actors as I have seen lies in this, that they carried into daily life a perfect stage technique : all their gestures and every utterance was finished. A cinema (had such devilries been then invented) could have shown at any moment Mr. Bancroft having his lunch or Mrs. Bancroft being gracious to a lot of young men, and the representation would have been ideal for the film. The modern actor on the other hand has brought into the limelight all the realistic awkwardness of untrained speech and movement, till a superstition has almost grown up that the amateur is your proper actor, if he can only " be himself " on the boards.

What I learnt about the stage was mostly from her : for she had brought from her professional life a need for much exercise, and she took it walking ; but not by going for walks. In front of the door was a large old-fashioned oval of parterre, filled with shrubs and surrounded by a gravel path. The circuit may have been twenty yards or thirty ; but her exercise consisted in walking round this from déjeuner to tea time : and she did not like to walk alone. At first there was great competition for the honour of being her listener : she was then engaged in writing her Memoirs and it was part of her exercise to talk them out. But after a while we conspired to arrange relays, and once at least the man who should have relieved me failed. I was not so stupid as to undervalue my privilege, but that day it seemed to me excessive. Yet in all my life I have never learnt so much about the conditions of the queerest of all arts.

No life, she insisted, could be healthier than that of the stage. It imposed regular hours and regular meals and a good mixture of physical effort with brainwork. The stage was the best of doctors. She had been carried from a sick-bed in a blanket to the stage door, and came on, and found herself absolutely cured by the bracing tonic of a thing to do and the response to doing it. I asked her once the old question, if she did not get weary of repeating the same performance hundreds of times ; and I have never forgotten the assured conviction of her answer. Each new performance was a new exhilaration : it was the coming into a room full of friends delighted to see you : perhaps you had to speak before you came on, and you heard them recognize the voice with a burst of applause. Such an art as hers is surely not all giving ; such an actress is taking all the time from her listeners the warm reflection of their delight. But what a thing it is to warm your heart in the sunshine you have shed !

I never read her Memoirs and never wanted to : there was nothing about her to make one think she could write. I never met her again and never felt the wish to : she never stirred in me any of that feeling which has made me all my life want to meet Miss Ellen Terry, just to say that I have always adored her, young or old, from a distance. But as an artist, Lady Bancroft had perhaps more than any other of the quality which makes good part of the greatness of Dickens—that exuberant good-natured gaiety of English people in a holiday humour, with no poetry about it, no romance, but a tremendous physical well-being. I am sure that the meal which she ate regularly at six o'clock was a solid and substantial and thoroughly British repast.

It was October before I made myself come to London, where Herbert Read was preparing for the same examination. He had taken the Senior and Junior University scholarship in Mathematics—a great feather in the cap of the present Principal of B.N.C., Dr. Sampson, then a new addition to the college staff. I think it was Read who had discovered

the firm of crammers known as Coates and Craig: but it should have been my discovery, for W. J. Craig was a Trinity man, a friend of many of my acquaintances, and a far-out kinsman of my father's. And Craig was the best thing that any of us got there, and the most unlikely thing in a cram shop. He was what we call in Ireland a "genius," meaning by that something admirable and eccentric—with more emphasis on the eccentricity. God knows that Craig had enough eccentricity to furnish a regiment of queer people. But I have always held, that though little of his work remains, and that little wholly inadequate to convey his gifts, he was a man of letters in whom the faculty of appreciation amounted to genius, in the larger sense. No one of our times, I believe, has known Shakespeare as he did. Pick up a volume, read out a line at random, and he could go on with the passage: and it was not a mere feat of memory. He knew everything that was to be known about any of the plays; and this was only part of his intimacy with the whole Elizabethan literature. On it he specialized, for it was the great hunting ground for rare and picturesque words, which he pursued as an entomologist his specimens. Yet even words were secondary in his delight: what he loved was poetry. Spenser was a storehouse of words, but Craig told me how when a boy he discovered the *Faery Queen* and "simply ramped through it." It was not the words that set him ramping, it was the music, the romance, the spell of a great poet, whom he never forgave me for not worshipping as he did. He thought that because I disapproved of Spenser as an Irish politician (it will be remembered that the gentle poet advocated killing out all the natives) this lessened my appreciation of Spenserian verse. But he was more seriously upset—indeed, he nearly struck me—when I said that Wordsworth must have been little better than a cockney: if he so rarely saw a cuckoo, it could only have been because he did not recognize the bird unless it shouted at him. Of the moderns, Wordsworth was Craig's poet, though there were no exclusive devotions in his catholic taste. But all

the passion of his life, like Wordsworth's, was for the steep and the cataract and the lonely places and long solitary walks. He was in a way the most gregarious and companionable of mortals, but at all times he was content to tramp it alone in open country—yet not only for the scenery ; it was part of his athleticism. God made him short-limbed, thick, gnarled and uncouth, the image of a badger : but he was very strong and he had the heart of a good-natured bull-dog. In his college days the fashion of walking races still lasted (it only died out while I was at school), and the seven mile (sometimes covered in an hour) was one of the chief events in the College Park. That attempt to get speed out of heel and toe which heel and toe were never meant to give makes an ugly and unnatural movement ; but the great pedestrians of his day were the Harts, superb, tall young men, golden haired and well over six feet. Against them Craig used to compete, pushing himself along by jerks, with elbows sawing furiously. Barkley Higginson and I once beguiled him into giving a demonstration of how match-walking should be done, in the smoking-room of a demure Unionist Club to which Craig belonged. The few somnolent old gentlemen present stared and looked pained : it was lucky none laughed, for Craig was extraordinarily quick to resent anything that he took as an indignity ; and boxing had been another of his pastimes. Here again, he with his short reach and hampered muscles (for he always seemed clumsily tied up in knots) used to compete against Tom Myles and the like : having only one point of excellence, his indomitable pluck and power of taking punishment.

Barkley Higginson was the pupil who shared Craig's lodgings in Edward Square : one of a large contingent from the North of Ireland. Craig was an Ulsterman, and had he lived to 1913 would have been the fiercest of Covenanters—though many of his friends were of quite another complexion. I do not know how his reputation as a teacher spread, but a famous Ulsterman, the first Lord Cairns, made him tutor to his son, and then passed him on to a

notable household—Lord Salisbury's. Craig instructed Lord Hugh Cecil—in his opinion the cleverest boy we ever encountered. Nothing has ever convinced me more of Lord Salisbury's unconventional originality than this choice of a tutor; for Craig, with his strong North of Ireland accent, his amazing untidiness, and his lack of all "those soft parts of speech that chamberers have," was completely out of keeping with the English public school and university tradition. Also I doubt if his special gifts would have appealed to the Tory leader: at all events, I never gathered from him that Lord Salisbury was interested in literature. Lady Salisbury made friends with him, but no trace appeared that she had cared to explore the queer recesses of his mind. I think Lord Cairns must have convinced them that here was an exceptional man, good and bracing as a windy heath for the young, and possessed of a gift for imparting not only knowledge but the desire to read. That was his genius as a teacher. Barkley Higginson was one of dozens of young men who came to him with no taste for anything but the works of Hawley Smart and other sporting authors, and who went away enriched by a real liking for what is best in literature.

But Barkley was not the average young man. He came from a family in which literary aptitudes were oddly divided: for Craig had a struggle to put him and his two brothers into Sandhurst, but their sister, whom the world knows as Moira O'Neill, was not only able to make literature: she could have acted or drawn as easily and surely as she wrote, and she had the gift of languages. None of these gifts came to Barkley: but he had a special grace of nature which showed itself supremely in his relations with Craig. Many people who were Craig's friends—and few men had more friends—loved him and laughed at him, but none laughed so lovingly or with such comprehension as this Sandhurst candidate, twenty years his junior. It was Barkley's delight in these days to come back in the evening and wait till Craig began to stamp and fume about the room in furious quest

for the things which he had lost during the day : and then Barkley, from his pockets or other receptacle, would produce at least some of them. The boy revelled in the man's quaintnesses and oddities ; you might say that he mothered him ; but there was reverence behind his affection, and it was entirely proof against the opinion of the world. A couple of years later I went down to the Curragh to spend a night with Barkley whose regiment was quartered there ; and he told me with the utmost glee how Craig, coming to stay with him had arrived footsore, having lightheartedly attempted one of the enormous walks he used to do in college days. As a result of this, he had had to come to mess with one foot swathed in grotesque bandages and the other in a very old slipper. Many subalterns would have been full of selfconscious shame at producing such a guest (and Craig, even at his most normal, was seldom properly dressed on parade for any occasion) ; but Barkley's delight in his friend and pride in his friend went too deep for anyone's grin to affect it.

I for my part did not like Barkley's mess : I was never really at home in a mess even when I belonged to one ; the traditional atmosphere of the British Army never pleased me. But there is a kind of man who instinctively goes into the British Army with whom I have become friends more easily and happily than with any other type. Barkley was the only soldier whom I came to know intimately as a young man : but later the best reward of my army service was a crop of these friendships. They have all gone out of my life now, except my brother ; most of them have gone out of life itself ; but if I ever had to pick a companion for a desert island, that is the sort of man I should pray to find.

These two or three months of cramming were worth a good deal to me, since I owe to them the beginnings of my friendship with Craig and the beginnings of my friendship with Barkley which led later to a friendship with his sister. The work itself was rather a servitude, embittered by a special

terror—the preliminary qualifying exam. which included several long addition sums to be done in half an hour. One bought sheets of these cursed things, twenty figures high by ten wide, with the correct answers on another sheet, and practised at them against time. Once in my lodging I was in the middle of such a test and heard the door open, but refused to be interrupted and pursued until time was up without lifting my head; then I looked up and saw Walter Osborne in the door-way with a broad grin and his eternal sketch-book out, making a study in distraction. I qualified, however, and sat for the exam.—only to find myself thirteenth on the list, and there were not more than half a dozen posts worth taking. Read was fourth or fifth, and got into the War Office, from which after a few years he was transferred to the Colonial, where he has risen deservedly so high.

One incident has always amused me to remember. Mr. Justice Rowlatt must have been then only beginning his career at the Bar, for he supplemented earnings by coaching a few of us in classics. In some Latin hexameters I had included a line from Virgil; and when he brought them back to me with corrections, I saw a blue score under this. "*Quæ sint, quæ fuerint,*" he said: "I understand that, but what do you mean by *quæ mox ventura trahantur?*" It was a pleasure to refer this star of Cambridge to Conington's note on the passage.

He and I met later on playing fives at Fred Oliver's house; and I bear testimony to his competence. But in his official capacity when trouble with a publisher took me into Court, he lectured me from the bench, finding fault with the way I conducted my correspondence; and I could not answer back, though my mouth was full of a deal I wanted badly to say about the whole machinery of judicial procedure, as I had found it in that experience. A judge has even a more unfair advantage than the parson in his pulpit.

When the Civil Service possibility vanished, there remained only one immediate way of cashing my degree; and I drifted into schoolmastering, as did hundreds of others,

who with me haunted the gloomy precincts of a scholastic agency. My zeal for French made me jump at the offer of work for an Army crammer established in the Canton de Vaud, because in his household (so it was alleged) nothing but French was spoken.

The six months there are not a bright stretch in my memory. We were, however, right out of the tourist track, in the valley of the Broie (which flows from the ridge behind Lausanne to the Lac Morat), and I saw something of the Swiss. They recalled to me the dour Protestant farmer folk of County Donegal, but with this difference that the sense of humour did not enter into their composition. One thing, however, gave me a perception of continental life. They were rigidly Sabbatarian, yet I found the village turning out of a Sunday for rifle practice. I had scarcely seen a rifle, much less conceived a society where it was the business of every citizen to know the use of one ; and Schmid, the smart young Swiss who acted as secretary to my employer, surprised me by insisting on the fact that he was a soldier. He had done several trainings and would do his yearly fortnight, and it was the training of a *Chasseur Alpin*. All that continental life was infinitely more regulated than anything which the loose individualism of British methods (at their very loosest in Ireland) had ever brought to my experience. Also, it then seemed to me comic that the syndic who came to demand my papers should be a workman in a blouse. I was too stupid to realize that here was democracy working under my eyes. For, of course, what amazed me most was the phenomenon of a country with no leisured class—no gentry. Only one man in that community did no work, and he owned the big old feudal castle ; he was a hereditary proprietor ; but neither influence nor respect went with the position, and though he had read and travelled, and was good company, the community looked down on him as idle, immoral and mad. Disapproval there always seemed to take the form of attributing insanity. The three Swiss whom I liked best were all under this stigma. One was

the French teacher, and his mania was counted to be religion : he was indeed a very devout Protestant. But he had a feeling for literature and a delicate austere charm about him. The pride of his heart was a watch which his father had made : for these valleys maintain a population that the soil and the timber would never support : watchmaking was the main supplement. The rich man of Lucens (our village) was head of a factory for turning the precious stones that go—or went—into Swiss watches. But the rich man also was a blouse-clad peasant, differing only from his workmen in that he was their master—a hard master. He was ignorant ; but so were they. Everybody could read and write, and nobody did either, except to make out a bill. They had no outlook on the world. The third of my friends who had this outlook was perhaps more despised than anyone else, for he had been a soldier in the French *Légion Etrangère*. His insanity was drink, and until he had his dose of absinthe he sat like a dull lump. But as it worked through him he would begin to talk and talk well about strange life in Indo-China.

Yet in this society there remained queer survivals of the aristocratic feeling, though all titles had been finally abolished in 1848. Our secretary was proud of his armorial bearings ; and I remember his telling me that a very incompetent man-of-all-work, whose main duty was to black our establishment's boots, belonged to "one of the best families of Lausanne." And in fact there was a stamp of gentle breeding on that pathetic and incompetent creature, who did not even seem to have vices but just to have come down by the law of nature to the lowest grade in a society where everybody had to work for a living, and where he was one of the least fit.

There were among the Swiss two ordinary Europeans employed in the jewel-cutting factory, on its administrative side. One was a Frenchman, one a Prussian, and they lived together. The Frenchman was clever and wrote a little for Swiss newspapers, a third-class journalist and, after the fashion of his type, much preoccupied with *les femmes*. Against all my predispositions, I liked the Prussian

better—a good, clean, straight, honourable man, rigid, but a gentleman, and wholly free from that coarseness of fibre which Bismarck succeeded in making a sort of national ideal. Our German teacher, decent Bavarian though he was, had this brutality, both of thought and speech. But he was a jolly soul, and many a brew of red wine boiled up with cloves and sugar and water we drank together. We used to walk up the valley to Moudin, an hour's tramp with the *bise* cutting our ears, and debate on the way whether it should be *vin chaud* or rum punch.

There was little to do but walk, and I did much of it through the pine forests. Our mathematician, a Cambridge man, was a walker too and one holiday he and I cut across the hills to Estavayer at the end of Lac Morat where was a pleasant little inn and red wine, a change from the white *ordinaire* which, with slabs of Gruyère, made the only continental feature in our fare. As the year softened to spring, the valley filled with cherry blossom and once we made a great excursion to Territet and climbed the Rocher de Naye by night to see the sunrise. As we went up the lower slopes (for there was then no *funiculaire*) the air was heavy with scent of the pheasant-eye narcissus. Schmid was our guide, and when the sun came out over that huge panorama of peaked ranges, Mont Blanc to one side, Bernese Oberland on the other, "*Voilà la Suisse*," he said, and he said it well: he was proud of his country, and loved it, in his very commercial soul.

It was very plain, in those days, that the Swiss as a people detested the foreigners, out of whom they made so handsome a profit, and particularly detested the English-speaking folk. Their frugality was revolted by our prodigal islanders. But they were absolutely and entirely convinced that they had the right way of it, that their institutions held up a lamp to Europe. Who is to say they are not right? My mother's cousin Murrough O'Brien (in his day much known in Ireland, for John Morley put him at the head of the Land Commission) had a cult of Switzerland; it appealed

to his mixture of Puritanism and Socialism : a land where the Ministers of State got about three hundred a year was much to the liking of one who resented furiously the income of three thousand, thrust upon him as a condition of carrying out his views of Land Reform. Besides, he had a Puritan contempt of art ; and it seems to me now that I felt even then that the sense of beauty was what the Swiss lacked, while the French have it, down to the smallest peasant or *bonne à tout faire*. Culture in France had gone down to the very roots of the race ; in Switzerland, among a people by all statistical tests better educated, it was nowhere.

At all events I felt that when I went back after nearly forty years to this austere democracy. Whatever the Swiss made seemed to be ugly and commonplace and crude in colour—with one great exception. When they worked in wood, their dwellings had the instinctive charm of a bird's nest.

I came back to London in time to see the Jubilee of 1887, and went to call on an old French lady whom I knew. " You have brought back a *joli accent de commis voyageur allemand*," said she ; and indeed, it has often happened to me in later years to be taken for a German when I spoke French. But it was a fluent jargon and for many years after I read as much French as English.

I spent the summer at home discontentedly enough, trying to find a suitable post. Meanwhile, there was a great deal of lawn tennis. Those were the days of the Renshaws' unshaken ascendancy ; but apart from them, Ireland had as good players as were to be found and one of the best was among my father's divinity students. Eyre Chatterton has been long a bishop in India, and when I saw him more than thirty years later he told me he could still keep on top in his diocese and, for that matter, in the Presidency. It was condescension for him to play a good deal with me, giving me fifteen, but I at any rate got much joy out of it. First-class players in those days were chiefly confined to the ground game and played off the dropping, not the rising

ball ; but Chatterton had invented a stroke of his own, with an upward drag of the racquet which made the ball curve down : and he could hit very hard and was a beautiful player to watch. What he lacked, was what his rival generally beat him by. Willoughby Hamilton, "the Ghost," as he was always called, had few strokes in his game, his back-hand was wretched, but the forehand very accurate, and if he got a loose one, he would hit it almost as hard as one of his overhead smashes, which were terrifying. But what he won by was his cat-like quickness and his determination never to let any ball beat him that could possibly be reached. That family had the game-playing knack in great development : W. D. Hamilton (Drummond) got his Oxford blue at cricket, and I think also at Association ; a younger brother, Budd Hamilton, was the best cricketer that Ireland ever produced, except my brother Lucius ; and Budd, I think, could play any game well. Willoughby Hamilton was as bad a cricketer as could be found, and to look at him and Drummond playing lawn tennis together, Drummond seemed the better ; but Willoughby always won. He won finally at Wimbledon—the first Irishman who ever did so ; and it was by sheer concentration of will. He is now a senior on the Dublin Stock Exchange ; but I suppose he never concentrated on that with the same fury, or he would be a millionaire.

The acre or so of ground that surrounded our house in Temple Road came to be an object of interest from this time on. We were at the corner of the road, and from two sides presented the public with a view of many games : for besides the tennis court there was space enough for a cricket pitch, and when the younger boys came home from school, it was never idle. We, their elders, used to take a hand and bowl condescendingly at them—not foreseeing the day when we should go and play in occasional matches, and find that two of them would go in first, make a heap of runs, declare the innings, and leave us the pleasure of fielding out while Lucius bowled and Arthur kept wicket. But in those days

Lucius and Arthur were only boys of fourteen or under. The youngest of these cricketing heroes, Jack (J. T., afterwards an Indian Civilian and now a journalist) was at this time not much higher than a full-sized bat; but I cannot remember a time when whatever bat he played with was not academically straight. Even the youngest of us all, Brian, who never took seriously to games, was put into correct form from his infancy. Once, at Thorndale, some other small boy was brought over to play with these two, and Brian was heard afterwards saying to one of my sisters, "Tom seems to think cricket is a game." Brian knew better: it was a religion.

I date from this period my first introduction to two of the rarest excellencies—a great wine and a great talker. My father took me one evening to dine near Stillorgan at a house, afterwards famous for it became the property of "Boss" Croker, and Orby was partly trained there. But in my knowledge of it, Mr. Justice Murphy owned the place. It was a man's dinner, I being the only young man among my father's college contemporaries. There was also a quiet little priest. I soon became aware that the wine was excellent, and was being drunk with attention. Sitting next Dr. Williamson, Fellow of Trinity, I decided to drink what he drank; and it was a sound idea. Also, I listened with delight to his stories of playing whist with Charles Lever who, when he had to catch the morning mailboat, always sat up at cards through the night with his friends in Trinity.

But before long I found my mind chiefly engaged in marvelling who on earth was this little priest with the humorous face, who kept saying precisely the right thing in precisely the happiest way. For I had then never heard of Father Healy of Bray. The talk ran on no special lines: Father Healy was in no sense leading it. He showed no wonderful fund of information—I doubt if he ever read deeply, though he seemed to have absorbed a deal of knowledge through the pores; but no reasonable person could fail to see that this man was an extraordinary artist in con-

versation. There was not much literary turn apparent in his sentences, though if a man could write the way Father Healy talked, he would need no other merit. I remember one phrase. His host's claret, which indeed might have inspired a dunce, he called "bottled velvet, with an odour of violets." After dinner he told two stories of quaint peasant sayings. Both arose out of something in the talk : both were short, and told with the utmost reserve of skill. An outward turn of the palms, a glance of the eyes, an upward inflection of the voice—that is all, but the recollection suffices to keep me from attempting to render the tales without it. Yet one story he told that night is so characteristic of the man that I give it as I wrote it out from memory thirty years ago, after his death. Mr. Gladstone's name had come up, as in those days it could not fail to do ; and Father Healy was expressing admiration for his wonderful accomplishments.

"He asked me to breakfast in his own house one day," he said, "and there were a lot of big men there ; ministers and men of science, and writers and what not : but he seemed the master of every one of them on his own subject. Well, after breakfast, Gladstone began declaiming about the doctrine of indulgences ; and, seeing where I was, I tried to make myself as little as I could. It was no use ; he turned round on me there, with his eyes flashing : ' Father Healy, I saw with my own eyes in a church at Verona a notice offering to remit forty thousand years in purgatory for the sum of two hundred lire. Now—what do you say to that ? ' Well, I was in a fix with all those fellows looking at me ; but I thought of a way ; so I said : ' It's a fair offer, and I don't know where you'd go to do better.'"

That was the man all over. Infinite quickness and finesse ; but, if you please, an avoidance in talk of all serious conclusions. Father Healy took his priestly office seriously enough, by all accounts ; but his theory of conversation was that you should not be sufficiently in earnest to get out of the key of pleasant intercourse. A man like Macaulay,



Chancellor, Dublin.

FATHER HEALY.

who has information that he wants to pour forth, or like Carlyle, with a view of life that he cannot resist inculcating, or like Dr. Johnson, with a fixed opinion on every given subject that he desires authoritatively to pronounce, is not a good talker in Father Healy's sense ; there is no give and take about him. The talk of a remarkable man who will talk, must always be remarkable : and it is talk of this sort which can with some adequacy be reproduced ; but considering conversation as a fine art, Father Healy's ideal is the true one.

One sort of knowledge he had in perfection, knowledge of the world. A man who describes life can hardly be monotonous ; and the most characteristic part of his conversation was his description of the life he met, high and low. The last time I set eyes on Father Healy, I know it was at the conception of a story ; though how and when it came to birth, alas ! I never heard. I was driving down Harcourt Street, and I saw Father James, as his friends called him, standing stock-still on the pavement among people crowding past. He was looking at a drove of pigs weltering down the road in front of him, with three or four wild-looking Wexford men at their heels. In the days of character-pictures, it would have been the ideal subject, say, for Mulready. The day was cold, but his short, square-shouldered figure was at usual buttoned up only in his tight-fitting black coat. The square-jawed outline of his face, with the nose standing out sharp, straight and inquiring, over the close-shut lips, you might very likely see reproduced in rough outline among any score or so of Dublin car-drivers ; but the wit that shone there gave it a distinction all his own. Like that of most Irish priests his origin was from the people ; and it was a favourite subject of chaff¹ with himself. He delighted to tell people how he ran over from Cairo to Heliopolis " to see if any of the family were left there." His social success made some jealousies ; and almost the only story told in which his wit had a sting to it, is of his answer to some vulgar people who asked how he got on so well in fine houses.

"Faith," said Father Healy, "it must be from my mother I got it, for papa was as common as any of you."

The great artist in talk shares the fate of comedian and singer: nothing survives of his excellence but a grateful memory and notes of admiration in fugitive literature. Perhaps the fate of the musician and actor is even less unhappy, for at least they cannot be misrepresented; but a wit comes down to you with his best things torn from their context, his stories mutilated or, worse still, deformed with excrescences; and if he ever made a pun, it is certain to rise up in judgment against him. I have heard Father Healy talk incomparably a long evening through without any suspicion of such mere verbal ingenuity. That he made puns is not to be denied; but to read his biography one would think that he was as full of them as a Christmas pudding is of currants. And very naturally so. A pun is of all forms of wit the most portable; anybody can carry it about and produce it for inspection. And so the pleasant shock disappears, the pretty surprise of an unexpected turn, which was the poor pun's redeeming grace. When Father Healy punned, it was generally to put some life into the formulas of intercourse. A Protestant clergyman, whose parish overlapped, was calling on one of their common parishioners, when Father Healy came in. My friend said, laughing, that this was a double-barrelled visitation from the Churches. "Well," said Father Healy, "I'm glad the one barrel didn't go off before the other." It was a witty way of expressing a common civility. But I like better the phrase which leapt from him when we met in the street and he asked how was my father. "As well as a man can be with eight grown sons," said I. "The eight beatitudes, by Jove," said Father Healy in a flash.

But one cannot get him on paper. Print is not capable of reviving even a shadow of him. If a shorthand reporter had been there to take down every word that fell from his lips, even in his most set narratives, you would only have the dry bones of it. Where would be the modulation of his

voice, the slight movement of his hands, the twinkle or the turn of his eye? A phonograph might have done something; but then you would want the whole evening's talk. For a talker of Father Healy's excellence has that exquisite sense of fitness that Horace inculcates upon writers: *Jam nunc dicit jam nunc debentia dici*. I have heard him at a dinner when most of the people at table were young, and some of them children, tell story after story at the top of his voice, laughing as loud as any of us—and heaven knows we laughed loud!—while everybody listened, and there was no talk except to incite him to go on.

I do not think I ever went to that most hospitable house without meeting him. He was the parish priest of Mrs. Murphy and her daughter, for it was a "mixed" family, and after the usage which used to be accepted (but is now barred) the sons followed the religion of their father, the daughters their mother's. It was therefore one of the few places where Catholics and Protestants met easily—but in that respect it only reproduced the atmosphere of the Law Library. Judge Murphy liked to have clever young men about him; and the cleverest were his own sons; the most brilliant of them had a strong resemblance to their mother's father, Judge Keogh—an able lawyer of whom many hard things have been said.

I confess, as a historian, that in writing of Judge Keogh's career, I was moved to regard him with less rigour, first because of Mrs. Murphy's many kindnesses, but secondly because it was from him that the Murphy cellar came. He had laid down a great quantity of '64 Lafitte, the greatest Bordeaux of which there is living memory; and I never drank anything else at Judge Murphy's house, except sometimes Lafitte of '65—which was always called there the "coroner's wine" because of the body in it.

They say some of the '64 Lafitte still preserves its quality; but in 1897, or thereabouts, the Judge's eldest son told me that all his had perished: that was why he gave us the '65. I thank Providence for the many opportunities I had and

for the use I made of them. A wine merchant friend, the other day, held up his hands in pious admiration, and said, "What an apprenticeship!"

In the autumn term of 1887 the teacher of French at Rossall broke his leg, and I was called over to deputize for him. People were very kind, more particularly Furneaux, the sixth form master, and Christie, who had a house—though the "houses" there were merely sections of the big block. I liked the school with its fine, rough, hardy traditions; and when my deputizing was finished, the Headmaster, Dr. Tancock, asked me to come back in December and examine the sixth form. A very pleasant boy called Fletcher was then head of the school, and one afternoon as we were going down to play fives, I mentioned that I was going to examine his form. He stared at me a moment. "I suppose you mean the fifth," he said. I had pleasure latterly in telling that story about their headmaster, in Dr. Fletcher's presence, to the upper school at Charterhouse.

Certain acquaintances develop rapidly into real liking, and I should like to think that H. P. Hansel, whom I got to know well at Rossall, has some touch of the regret I feel that we never met since. He was well known to me by sight at Oxford, where he used to keep goal for the 'Varsity—his great height being very useful. Even on a football field, his face was noticeable; I have never seen a man whose countenance had so regular and so sympathetic a beauty; it had the fineness of a head of Leonardo; and whoever chose him to be tutor to the young Princes was well advised, for beauty when it is allied to so modest, simple and charming a nature has powerful prestige with youth. When I heard of the appointment, I said to myself that they might have picked the world elsewhere and not done so well.

At the end of 1887 my search for work came to an end, since, largely on Christie's recommendation, I was chosen for sixth form master at Bradfield, where he had formerly been on the staff. Walter Hill, then head of the Bradfield preparatory, had been one of my masters and friend at

St. Columba's, and he too helped to put me into this coveted post—by far the pleasantest experience in my teaching work. My stay in Bradfield was not long, but I made friendships that have lasted nearly forty years, and I scarcely feel a stranger in the beautiful place even now; though the last of my old colleagues, Steele, has withdrawn, to watch his son and daughter accumulating distinctions. But Miss Bullen, the matron of heaven knows how many years' standing, would still give me a cup of tea if I blew in.

CHAPTER V

SCHOOLMASTERING

BRADFIELD showed me the home counties at their prettiest. The village was old and had many beautiful cottages and one delightful eighteenth century house. The school had been built round an old brick dwelling which I dare say was Tudor, and the church which then served the school for chapel, had a kind of squat comeliness apart from its lovely site. Stevens, the first Warden, had played the same part in Bradfield's history as Sewell in that of Radley, St. Columba, and Glenalmond. The Oxford Movement was behind it and had prompted a desire to maintain the cult of beautiful building. Pre-Raphaelite influences had left their trace in a fine window by Morris which adorned the dining hall. But like Sewell, Stevens had disregarded essential considerations of ways and means, and Dr. Gray took the school over from him at the lowest ebb. Gray brought a notable energy and a set of ideas rather alien from those of the founder, for he was as definitely Broad Church as Sewell and Stevens were Puseyite ; he liked the name of muscular Christianity, and justified it in his person, for he had the physique of a first-rate gymnast, and many Spartan ideas. The game he played best was fives, and it was one of my minor recommendations (tactfully pushed by Christie) that I also played. The court there was of the Rugby type with a back wall, and with decent players it was very hard to kill a ball, and Gray always played barehanded. I have a lurid memory of

taking him on at a single, and battering even my gloved hands to pulp, while his showed swollen and purple. I think we gave it up at a game all, after a full hour's play ; I could not have stood five minutes of it without gloves.

By 1888, when I arrived, Bradfield was strong and prosperous, already planning new buildings. Gray's great experiment of cutting a Greek theatre from the adjoining chalk quarry, apart from its extraordinary artistic interest, had justified itself by spreading the school's fame. He had also pushed the cadet corps much harder than was then at all usual, and had found a first-rate help in the mathematical master, R. Temperley, who applied a very clear mind to the detail of volunteer organization (and published several manuals on the subject). But in the year that I was there the school team did notable things at Wimbledon, even winning the Spencer Cup.

Bradfield was probably best known for these subsidiary activities—and also for Dr. Gray's strong personality and his very unconventional sermons to the boys. Andrew Low, second in command, chafed a good deal at the interruptions to regular work which the " stunts " (as we should call them now) occasioned ; but he saw to it that there was plenty of solid grind. He was, on the whole, the best schoolmaster I have ever come across, and my dislike of the profession is largely justified to me by his lack of advancement in it. If Low had gone into the Army, he would have been at the least an exceptionally good commander of a regiment ; and one of my grievances against the Army is that its standard of personal expenditure barred such a man from entering. Or, again, he would have been a first-rate and possibly a great administrator. He had the natural gift for being obeyed and his severity was so allied with justice and natural kindness that scores of those who suffered at his hands (and scores of scores suffered) used to write back after they had left school and testify of their gratitude. He was a gentleman and scholar who could teach one thing especially : the respect for work as duty. If a boy did not

put the accusative case after a transitive verb, he was beaten, without qualms, for the moral offence of inattention. Low had no use for coaxing boys into learning ; they were to be taught as a duty, to learn how to learn. Naturally, he tried, as every good teacher will, to help the process by enlisting their interest ; that is the easy part of the business of teaching. But his excellence lay in the positive side of discipline, which means enforcing continuous effort and attention. At Bradfield and elsewhere in my experience, the masters who talked most about "stimulating interest" were often those who failed in the negative discipline, which is simply preventing the young from playing the fool.

In short, Low was essentially working on the same lines as my mother, the best teacher I ever saw—and certainly not the least austere. He ought to have had a school of his own ; but he lacked the two qualifications then essential for almost any headmastership. The first was to take orders ; and this is, happily, no longer needed. The second thing indispensable was, and I fear still is, a good degree. He had idled at Cambridge, and would probably never with labour have got a first ; he had not the examination-passing type of mind, and would never have been a good sixth form teacher ; but that is the easiest job in any school, for myself for instance ; and twenty like me could have been found for one with the special gift that Low had displayed in ten years' work. Yet the like of me would have been always chosen over Low's head for a headmastership.

These are things that I think worth saying, since some influential opinion may be influenced by any chance word. My own purely temperamental attitude towards school-mastering, as a trade, was expressed shortly after I escaped from it :

"The gravest objection to the profession is in its very nature. It interferes with personal liberty even more than the Army in one direction. A man is not free to marry when he likes, nor to choose his own way of life. He is thrown into that sort of artificial intimacy which

comes of daily intercourse with a set of men whom he has not selected for his intimates. (This is of course felt most at the smaller schools.) In addition to that, he must behave as if he were in a sort of lay orders, must be eternally setting an example to others, eternally insisting upon the moral point of view for the benefit of his pupils. 'This is right, that is not'; 'this is gentlemanlike, that is not'; those are the sort of pronouncements that he has to make with damnable iteration; and in most cases he has to go to church a great deal oftener than he desires to. Nobody minds making a virtue of necessity, but the scholastic profession makes a necessity of virtue. Besides this, continual intercourse with minds on a lower plane of development is bad for the intelligence, and such intercourse is inherent in teaching. The business of teaching does not touch the larger interests of life. Boys and masters at a school have shrewd glimpses into each other's nature, but they cannot know one another intimately. Compare a schoolmaster's work with a doctor's, a lawyer's, or a clergyman's: the other men see something of humanity in its vital relations; in all the drudgery of these professions a man must come across facts or scenes that give him something to think about. If a schoolmaster is judged by his interests, he ranks low; no class of man, unless, perhaps, stockbrokers talks a more unprofitable "shop." The average schoolmaster is the extreme type of that protracted boyishness which so marks the present generation of Englishmen. It is expected of him that he should take an interest in school sports; it would be bad form for him not to go down and look on while the house he is attached to plays off its cup-ties at cricket or football; and the obligation always strikes an outsider as a trifle undignified. But what is really saddening is that you could hardly keep these men away if you tried. The house-matches occupy almost the same position in their imaginations as in the minds of the boys.

“Public schoolmasters are as a whole an admirable race, fine specimens of the healthy Englishmen who take their pleasure in climbing Alps, and believe most devoutly in doing their work and keeping themselves in hard condition ; but they belong to a profession which debars most of them from making a mark in it, and does not provide healthy nourishment for the mind. Considering that they are the picked men of the universities, it is sad that they should be less good company than the average doctor or Army man ; but so it is.”

Of course my great quarrel with the job was that I wanted to be married ; for I became engaged (to my cousin) three months after I came to Bradfield and consequently my whole thought was to leave. A headmaster might naturally dislike frequent changes in his staff, but Dr. Gray behaved as if he had no concern but to further my wishes ; and that summer he put an attractive offer in my way. Mr. Ritchie, then President of the Local Government Board, thought highly of Gray's judgment and wanting a private secretary asked his help to choose one. Mr. Ritchie's position was then very considerable, for the Local Government Act of 1887 had been one of the Unionist Party's main achievements. There was a general feeling that he stood for the progressive side of Unionism, and when I went to see him I gathered that he would not be loth to extend this very democratic measure to Ireland. Also, I liked that big good-natured and capable man, and did not feel that I should be out of sympathy with him on essentials. But I was a Home Ruler, and told him so ; and he made it quite clear, not only that he must speak and vote against Home Rule, but that it would be part of my duty to help him in preparing speeches against it. He said I was to go away and think it over ; and he wrote to Dr. Gray that I suited his taste better than the other applicants (one of whom afterwards entered Parliament and became a Minister). But my mind was clear, and the other person chiefly concerned was at least equally clear,

that I could not do it; and so I wrote my refusal and a very friendly reply from him ended that matter.

Looking back on it now, I think that Mr. Ritchie in the summer of 1888 believed that self-government for Ireland was going to come and was not averse from it. Parnell's triumph in the Pigott case was recent; the Irish cause was being pushed hard in the constituencies; and the divorce and the split were not yet in view. Ten years later, when Parnell was long dead, and the rival factions had been tearing each other in Ireland, I think that I or any other young man like me, having formed no political ties, would have probably gone in gladly with anyone whom he thought likely to make even a partial improvement in Irish conditions. But in 1888 the solidarity which Parnell had created bound all Irish Nationalists.

My memories of Bradfield include some impression of the distinguished little community which then inhabited Yattendon, a pretty village three or four miles off among the woods and spings. Waterhouse the architect had built himself a fine great house there, of red brick proper to the Thames Valley; and there was a hall in it with the most charmingly contrived chimney corner to sit by. Near him dwelt Robert Bridges, married, I think, to Waterhouse's sister; and the parson of the parish was H. C. Beeching. Precisely in that summer of 1888 the literary world was attracted and puzzled by *Pages from a Private Diary* appearing unsigned in the *Cornhill*. It was not difficult for us at Bradfield to guess Beeching's authorship and assign the persons who figured in it. Whether from that book, or from visits, or from gossip, I keep a feeling that literary and artistic talent was much too thick on the ground in that seclusion. Mr. Waterhouse struck one as a person very easy to live with; he had that quality of the plastic artist whose sensibility is soothed by the constant handling of solid things; whose work materializes before his eyes. The writer has no such consolation, and Beeching, though a charming companion, had the overstrung nerves of the

traditional literary man ; while the poet—a poet distinguished poet to behold—certainly belonged to the *genus irritabile vatum*. I suppose when you do not care for a man's work, his personality is little likely to please you, and I never, in repeated attempts, got any pleasure from the work of Dr. Bridges—with one odd and notable exception. There is a triolet beginning :

“ We never guessed when first we met
That love would prove so hard a master.”

which seems to me the best thing of its kind ; that powerful hand on the viol-strings manages to convey strange weight of feeling through the tenuous medium.

But in that little highbrow coterie, the brow of Robert Bridges was the highest and most austere ; I thought him donnish and morosely donnish ; and no work of his has obliterated that feeling.

At the end of 1888 I left Bradfield for a chance opening which seemed hopeful. Firth College at Sheffield was then a struggling institution, its professor of classics had moved on and the Board did not feel certain enough of the future to fill up the post at once ; so they applied for a temporary man to take up the work, combined with some teaching of literature. I was appointed, and so made my first acquaintance with an industrial town.

Sheffield was in those days little more than a monstrous overgrown village, lying in a huge cup of the moors which it filled : factory chimneys rising up here and there round the rim of skyline. It was an astonishment when I found I could put up grouse within half an hour's walk from my rooms, not so pleasant a surprise when I sat down and found that the heather came off black. In summer there were leagues of bogcotton there—dark grey bogcotton.

I should have been very forlorn at Sheffield but for the friendliness of an Irish doctor (a namesake and far out cousin) and his Irish wife. What little I saw of Sheffield well-to-do people did not attract me ; I liked the fathers

who had made the money better than the second generation who went to Oxford or Cambridge to learn to spend it. But young or old they had not much thought beyond money. One magnate indeed I met who was a serious-minded public-spirited and able man—then Mr. Hadfield—and he was concerned about Firth College and has probably been a great factor in its transformation to the University of Sheffield.

The classes that I had to teach were very small and I keep no memory of any pupils except two. One was a lamplighter. He desired to be an actuary and probably made a good one ; but the necessity of learning Latin gave him trouble. His trade meant tramping twenty-five miles a day, carrying a small ladder, and I often met him on his rounds, when he was shy about greeting me. He was the most tongue-tied creature I ever knew (for one thing he worried about his h's) but I think we liked each other. Anyhow that tall, lean, uncouth Yorkshireman has always been in my affectionate memory.

The other was an experimental chemist, also wanting Latin for some qualification : a little nervous man with a sandy beard that did not mask his receding chin ; and words came tumbling out from his sensitive mouth in such a hurry that they tripped over each other, while he was expatiating on the virtues of an explosive to which his life was devoted. He would shove his hand into his pocket, bring out a fistful of the yellow powder and pitch it on the fire, before he had got to the point of explaining how perfectly innocuous a stuff was cordite—just then seeking for recognition and adoption. Cordite carried him to a knighthood, I think ; at all events I heard of a Sir Cocking in connection with the factory at Arklow. Lord ! if anybody had told me then how much of the stuff we should all see blown off !

The first newspaper article of mine that saw the light appeared in the *Sheffield Independent*. It was not paid for, nor was I asked for any more. I was trying my hand at fiction, too, and a couple of short stories had a Sheffield setting. One of these appeared serially in a newspaper ; it was a yarn

about some young man like myself, with a taste for strange company, who became involved with a crew of dynamiters ; for dynamite was then in fashion. The suggestion came from an experience in the train between Euston and Holyhead, in which some men drew me into talk with flattery, and it was dangerous kind of talk. However, beyond adorning a tale, they played no further part in my existence. As for the stuff I wrote, it was no doubt an essay in discipleship. Like most young literary persons of that decade, I had been captured by Stevenson. About 1884, somebody lent me *Treasure Island* and I began reading it in my rooms at B.N.C. My candle burnt out and I remember getting up to find another—and realizing that I shook from head to foot with excitement. Thereafter I was Stevenson's liegeman ; and so, with a little more moderation, was my father. When *Prince Otto* was coming out in *Longman's* I often thought of writing to R.L.S. to say how much it had delighted not only me but one whose approval was worth having ; and later, when I knew that this book had been more or less a disappointment and a set-back, I was very sorry that letter had not been written.

But, though I read pretty widely, I had begun to concentrate, so far as prose was concerned, on the eighteenth century and more especially on Swift. No doubt his Irish associations drew me to him ; but I made up my mind then that in prose Swift was the master ; and I have never changed that view. Would to God there were a trace of him in my way of writing, but I can find none ; though he set his lasting mark on the Anglo-Irish mind. You will find it in Mahaffy's writings (slipshod though they are), especially perhaps in the *Art of Conversation* ; and, much more unmistakably in Dr. Salmon's controversial works. But most of all is it evident in the speeches of Mr. T. M. Healy, when Mr. Healy is at his best.

At all events, when I was asked to give a public lecture in Sheffield the subject I chose was " Swift as a Satirist," and saw myself billed over the town ; but before the discourse

was delivered, somebody came to me asking, "Are satirists very swift?" I cannot flatter myself that the lecture was a success; but it made the groundwork of the first solid piece of prose that I ever published—a long article on Swift in the *Church Quarterly Review*, to whose editor, Mr. Knight Watson, my father had given me an introduction.

That, however, was after I had left Sheffield; for when my temporary appointment drew to an end, the Governing Board were still uncertain as to whether they should afford a permanent professor of Classics, and they were not willing to agree that if it were decided to have one I should have the post, as of right. So I decided to look for something on which I could marry and what offered was a post at a crammer's in Clifton. Pay was to be supplemented by the profits on taking in pupils as boarders. And so in December, 1889, my wife and I got married, and in January we set up house; and for five years I remained working for Mr. Albert Cole. After a couple of years we gave up the boarding idea, as my wife had her hands more than full with her own family.

We made acquaintances of course—chiefly bookish, for we were both bookish people. I note as a trait of the time that we belonged to a Browning Society; and also that we read Browning with avidity. Of all the authors that I have enjoyed he is the one who most perplexes me; for I cannot be sure how he will look to later generations. Was it just that his militant optimism said the things that we wanted to hear said—things adapted to our special age and time? Anyhow he was in my life the poet of youth: I have seldom turned back to him. But then I knew the best of him so well that I hardly needed to turn back, and there is nowhere in his work that shimmering beauty, that magic and mystery which makes one read and re-read the greatest verse—and which is freely in Tennyson, for all Tennyson's limitations.

Clifton is always associated for me with one event. On an October afternoon in 1891, I came into the street to find newsboys shouting the death of Parnell. In all my life, no other announcement has conveyed such a shock;

and in realizing what it was to me, remote then from Irish politics, preoccupied with my own concerns, I can see what it meant to the mass of the Irish people—even to those who had dethroned him. I myself was at first simply unable to believe it true: in Ireland, a legend lasted for years that he was still living.

I had only seen him once, in the summer of that year, when we were spending the holidays at Thorndale. The Parnellite cause was already a lost one; but a meeting was announced to be addressed by him on his way back from the Carlow election—the last but one that he fought. My brother Arthur, then a boy of seventeen, went in with me. We found the great hall packed with men; for Dublin was passionately Parnellite. The chairman had to announce defeat; but speaker after speaker of the band on the platform vowed the determination to go on, and the audience cheered them fiercely. It was there that I first saw John Redmond, and can with difficulty reconcile that impression with my later knowledge; he was slight then, the head flung forward, and the big nose was not then balanced as later by the jutting chin. Edmund Leamy, a gifted journalist, made the best of the opening speeches. But at last Parnell rose, and in an instant all the audience were on their feet, straining forward as if trying to reach and touch the tall bearded man who stood there, so impassive and so deadly white. He spoke without animation, the sentences dropping slowly, with nothing new said; there was no need to stir emotion, the whole place was tense with it and his restraint was the more impressive. But at last he had occasion to mention the one who in that bitter fight had heaped most insult on the woman; and suddenly his voice became vibrant with the intensity of scorn. “Mr. Healy,” he said, “This hillside man!” That was all; but the words went hissing down the room like the thong of some devastating whip. He had no need to say more; that audience felt the full implication of his contempt for the extremist politician who, when it came to a choice between Gladstone and Parnell,

chose the Englishman as the more necessary to Ireland. But there was more than scorn in that withering irony; there was passion more potent than I have ever heard again in the human voice, and it was the passion of hate. No man could hear and be unaffected by it. I do not wonder that in those days, and perhaps even more after Parnell's death, Mr. Healy's life was held to be in danger in Dublin.

There are many still who have not forgiven Mr. Healy for the things he said and did at the time of the Split; and I do not wonder. But there is none of them who will not admit that personal danger, if it affected Mr. Healy at all, only made him more provocative.

After Parnell's death, the romance was out of Irish politics; and the bickering increased till most of us were sickened. For the five years that I was in Clifton, I had less touch with Ireland than in any other period of life. Every year we spent a holiday there; but my interests were increasingly centred upon literature. The great point in favour of work for a crammer was that one did one's work and was done with it. It was hard work, for keeping other people's attention fixed needs more effort than concentrating your own; and we taught thirty hours in the week. But out of class I went back to my home and not to the shop of a common-room; and I wrote continually, and not unnaturally made acquaintance with another aspirant. This was C. H. Russell, the sixth form master at Clifton. We compared our efforts and our luck with editors; and I owe him two evenings that remain in my memory. One was spent in the company of Quiller Couch, who had been a school friend of his. Yet I remember nothing except that I liked "Q" as well as I liked his writings, and that is saying a good deal. The other encounter was with Conan Doyle (not yet Sir Arthur) who had come down to lecture on "The Novel," and was staying at the College. Russell took me after the lecture to see him, and I said something about Sherlock Holmes. "Thank God I've killed the brute," said Conan Doyle, "don't let me hear a word about him."

I was prepared to admit that Sherlock Holmes need not be taken so seriously, as, for instance, the short story called *A Straggler of Waterloo*. "That!" said Conan Doyle, contemptuously. "A mere sketch; it cost me no bother at all. Now I had to do a year's reading before I could begin to write *The White Company*." So then I began to perceive why the lecturer had set down *Quentin Durward* as the best of all Scott's works, and I tackled the question. Whatever Sir Arthur Conan Doyle may think now, he was then prepared to affirm that the Waverleys which were based on Scott's living experience ranked as works of art below those which had to be constructed by the historic imagination; he even accepted the inference that *Anne of Geierstein* should be preferred before *Guy Mannering*. I did not push the matter to *Count Robert of Paris*; but I did convince myself that a really good writer of fiction might be a really bad critic.

Clifton could boast in those days of a good Shakespeare Society—good because the moving spirit of it, Dr. L. M. Griffiths, was immensely studious and built up a considerable library for the work. Taking play by play, he used to lay our subjects for study; and in that way I was pushed into acquiring a degree of knowledge, afterwards very useful in reviewing.

There was some other society that dealt in literary lectures, for I went there to hear Dr. Glazebrook, then head of the College, giving his views on the Modern Novel. He thought little of the art of fiction as it was then practised; and I on my part thought that he suffered from what would now be called the superiority complex. Certainly he lifted his eyebrows in lofty scorn when I got up and said that something might be hoped from two young men who had recently been producing short stories. Their names were Barrie and Kipling. I got leave to elaborate my views for the *Church Quarterly*, in an article called *The Journalist in Fiction*. Barrie had produced his first play, and my article speculated whether in the then condition of the English theatre it was not to be desired that the stage should engage much of his

energies—as I foretold that in any case it would—of course, before this time (1892) both reputations were fully established in London.

Some time before this, Craig, living in London lodgings, became acquainted with his neighbour on the staircase, a young Scotch journalist who at times dropped in to smoke a pipe, and confided to Craig his ambition to get into Parliament, as a member of the Irish Party. He wished to know if Craig could manage it for him. I have my doubts if the Barrie of those days was serious in the proposal; he has never been noticeably simple-minded, and only the simplest Saxon could have thought a red-hot Ulsterman likely to help for that purpose.

I missed my opportunities of knowing a notable poet in those days at Clifton, for T. E. Brown was a master at the College. Russell and others of his colleagues talked to me about his work. They had great enthusiasm for it, which was a little dashed when, on retiring from the College, he published a volume with a poem that began:

“I’m here at Clifton grinding at the mill
My feet for thrice nine barren years have trod.”

It contained phrases acceptable to those who did not like schoolmastering.

“There is no silence here: the truculent quack
Insists with acrid shriek my ears to prod.”

Or again

“Pragmatic fibs surround my soul, and bate it
With measured phrase that seeks the assenting nod.”

I met this unwilling pedagogue at the table of a very gifted host. That was Canon Ainger, whose periods of being “Canon in Residence” at Bristol Cathedral were marked with a stone as white as his hair. That snowy thatch over a face that suggested early middle age added to the personal distinctiveness of this lettered divine—who was at once so English, and so unusual in England. He suggested inevit-

ably some French Abbé of the old monarchy ; his clericism had so mundane a cut, yet his polished talk was so clearly differentiated from a layman's. Man of letters he was, and man of the world, but both with a curious clerical stamp on them. He had also the un-English talent of perfect elocution, and it was a delight to hear him read aloud—a delight which he enjoyed giving. The *Barrack Room Ballads* were new then, and once he read us *Mandalay* : then, shutting the book, said, " It may be poetry or may not ; but anyhow it is a work of genius." We had not then become so reconciled to the introduction of slang elements into the poetic vocabulary.

On his death Beeching succeeded him as Reader at the Temple—and the choice was natural. But the difference was great. In Beeching also the man of letters was more prominent than the cleric ; but one missed the man of the world. Canon Ainger's urbanity is a thing to have known.

From these years I kept two lovely memories—one of age, one of youth. Age was Miss Caroline Napier, daughter of the historian. Sir William Napier had the name of being the handsomest man in the British Army and she bore witness to it. Her hair was not silvery : it was milk white, but it had the sheen of silk, and all her movements were adorable. She did me the inestimable service of turning me loose on the literature of her family, that large record of heroism, generosity, and, I think also, of high wisdom. Other men have agreed with me that the *Memoirs of Sir Charles Napier* is to some, anyhow, the most interesting book in the English language. At all events, any man who is going to be a soldier ought to read that life of a very great soldier, written by another who perhaps only lacked equal opportunities to become equally illustrious ; and anybody who has to attempt the difficult task of biography should study that example of how to use materials so that, while you reconstruct the historic episodes, you are at the same time building the story of the life itself and the portrait of the man.

Youth in my memory is Mrs. Patrick Campbell, playing in the open air for Ben Greet's Company at the Clifton Zoo. I went almost by chance to the first of the two plays; which was *As You Like It*, and I saw a Rosalind whose speech was running music, giving the verse all its inflections as easily as a bird sings; never denying you the rhythm, yet always moulding the rhythm to the meaning; and with this melody ran another speech of gesture, as fluent and as naturally varying, one movement passing without break into the next. Her "Viola" in *Twelfth Night* is not so easily remembered. Perhaps, indeed, there is not a great deal to be made of Viola. From that day I watched the rise of Mrs. Patrick Campbell; but when my next chance came, she was playing in a translation of Coppée's *Pour la Couronne*, and everything was changed. Somebody had been telling her that certain notes in her voice were marvellous, and on that limited range she spoke the whole part, or rather chanted it, monotonously. After that came *Mrs. Tanqueray*, and we had the actress in full maturity: dazzling, no doubt; and she was better still in *Magda*. But the dew of the morning was off her. She recovered romance in Maeterlinck's *Pelléas and Mélisande*—romance heavy with passion; yet the gaiety, and the sparkle and the woodland music that are in Shakespeare's romantic comedies as nowhere else in the world, and that she had brought walking and speaking and laughing and singing there before us—these were gone. But nobody, no, not even Miss Ellen Terry, ever played one of these parts as Mrs. Campbell played Rosalind under the sunshine that summer afternoon.

I was attached to that little Zoo. There were polar bears in it about which I wrote the earliest of the things which I preserve. What I was writing then was chiefly verse, and some verses made my first connection with the *Spectator*. T. W. Rolleston did me the service of submitting them to old Mr. Hutton.

Rolleston was then living in London and was a member of the Rhymers' Club, to which I accompanied him one

night, and sat next to Lionel Johnson, very small and precise of speech, over the tumblers of punch, but very companionable and easy. Morley Roberts, ostentatiously unlike the rest of that company, as if got up to look the part of one who had shipped before the mast, pushed forward as Yeats was looking for a match. "Here," he said, "I don't mind lighting a cigarette for the only poet in the whole caboodle." Everybody else was rather ultra-refined, and most of them small of stature.

Poems were read aloud, but left no mark on my memory.

I was, however, making the acquaintance at Clifton of a rhymers who had greatly more success and I think more lasting merit than any of the Club whom I met that night—with the exception that Morley Roberts made. Very few modern books of verses have gone through so many editions as Moira O'Neill's *Songs of the Glens of Antrim*, and my wife and I watched her in the making of it—an affair of several years. We met her staying with two O'Brien kinswomen of ours, cultivated and delightful women; and she was then one of the smallest things I ever saw to be a grown woman, but with vitality enough to charge twice as big a bulk. I never met anyone to whom writing came so easily. The first of her songs, written, I suppose, when she was about twenty-two, was *Sea-Wrack*; and she never wrote anything better; the first prose fiction she attempted was a short story called *Hallowe'en*, and in this field she certainly did her best work first. Both these were published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, where the bulk of her work has appeared; though later on having more of the verses than *Maga* could use, at my suggestion she sent some of them to the *Spectator*.

But the fantastic thing about it was that she to whom excellence came with so little effort did not want to use her gift. "You can write naturally," she wrote to me, "you can like it. But I hate even the feel of the pen between my fingers." And yet the pen between her fingers produced

the most beautiful script that I have ever seen in modern times ; if it were written close up (for economy of parchment) it might be the work of one of the old Gaelic scribes. It always went against me to burn what she had written and so there survives a pile of letters to both my wife and to me—and copies of her verses. I have often thought that Blackwood should bring out the *Songs of the Glens* in a volume photographed from her manuscript.

The letters are all full of shop ; for though she did not care for writing, she liked talking shop—and said so. But the shop varies. In the earlier years it was concerned with criticism of her work, my work, or someone else's ; in the later ones, when the sheets began to have the imprint of a bullock on top, with a hieroglyph on his side, and the legend underneath, " Cattle Branded same as Cut on Right Ribs," talk was all about business arrangements. For she had married and gone out to Canada and, as years went on, she, who had written before because her mother urged her to, now wrote very largely for the sake of the money—and said so with every vehemence of iteration. Certainly, such work as hers is never done only for that reason (which I should be the last to disparage) ; but all the best of her work was done before she married. I say this, though I find that Lennox Robinson in his *Golden Treasury of Anglo-Irish Verse* has chosen to represent her by two lyrics from her later volume, *More Songs of the Glens*.

The truth is that nearly all the best literature produced by women comes from the unmarried, because marriage and children occupy too much of a woman's subconscious mind. That is what her brooding thought falls back to in the intervals of surface activity—just as a writing man's falls back to whatever work he has on hand. Yet I do not know what other Irish poet of my generation, with the one great exception of Yeats, has produced so much work that is likely to survive as Moira O'Neill. Hers is out of fashion nowadays, if only because it avoids the ugly as instinctively as a butterfly shuns mud ; perhaps too, because its melody is easy, natural

and light. But she is in a great tradition and one that has always appealed to the simplest as well as to the most lettered—that tradition of the Scottish lyric, in which so little is English except the English speech, and which has its counterpart in so much Gaelic folk poetry.

The Glens of Antrim, where she was bred, is a patch of Gaelic Ireland in the most Protestant settled county of them all. Gaelic speech still lingers there, though only like late snow on a mountain side; but all English speech there is coloured with it and shaped by it. Yet there, as in so many other places of Ulster, old and beautiful English words, Shakespearean survivals, linger in common use. I find, for instance, that I had been criticizing one of her songs, because “heartsome” seemed to me too literary for spoken speech. She sent me back this quotation from the talk of some old Glenswoman—“Miss Hilda’s a heartsome sight in a garden. She sits down under a gooseberry tree, an’ she doesn’t leave it.”

There was less of this noble English in the Donegal dialect, which indeed is almost purely Scots. But I had an odd experience some years later, when two young Belfast lads sent in an opera that they wanted the Irish Literary Society to put somehow on the stage. It was the oddest jumble of Gaelic adaptations and archaic English. Presently they came to see me—bearing then the names of Joe and John Campbell, but they are now well known as Seosamh and Seaghan MacCathmhaoil, one a poet, the other a black and white artist. I said to them: “You’ve been reading a heap of Elizabethan stuff.” “What’s that?” said they. “Well,” said I, “you’ve read Shakespeare.” Oh, aye, they’d read Shakespeare—*Hamlet* and a couple of other plays. So I got their manuscript and picked out a phrase that belonged to Beaumont and Fletcher, another that was Massinger’s, to my knowledge, and so on. Every time they gave me, not chapter and verse, but a reference to the original from which they drew. “Fly pride, says the peacock,” for instance, was an habitual saying of a ganger who

looked after roadmenders ; he was a copious source of their supply.

I once went down, in 1894, when Barkley Higginson was at home, to stay at Cushendun. There is no lovelier bit of the Glens, though many are more scenic, than that shore with its rocky, weed-fringed points jutting out from little stretches of clear sand, and the Scotch coast only a matter of fourteen miles distant across the Moyle. You can even see the houses and the windows flashing in the evening sun.

Quite near Rockport, where the Higginsons then lived, is the camp in which the MacDonnells stabbed Shane O'Neill to death and delivered Queen Elizabeth of her most formidable enemy. There is also beside the old road that follows the coast, a burying-ground for the children that die unbaptized, and I made verses about it, which are in the handful of Collected Poems that seem to me worth more than all my unnumbered writings in prose.

I saw Barkley no more after that summer ; his health had been impaired by India, and he went to ranch in Canada ; and there died after some little time—gallant and gentle and unselfish, the perfect officer for an Irish regiment.

My own soldier brother had by this time begun his varied career of active service. He was sent out to take charge of the small R.E. detachment in Sierra Leone ; it was just at the beginning of the period which reshaped European settlement in West Africa. For ten years before this, the French had been active on the Upper Niger, crushing one slave-raiding chief after another ; but in the course of events, Samory, a pagan captive of some Mohammedan raider, adopted Islam and became a notable warrior and finally chief of the tribe. His power spread and his "Sofas" or warriors, recruited from many tribes, spread terror everywhere. Pressure from the French, inland in the regions towards Timbuctoo, drove him west, and his raids spread into the hinterland assigned theoretically to Britain on the maps. An expedition was ordered out. Much of the country in which the raids were reported had been visited by no white man, for British occu-

pation in West Africa was then limited to a string of posts on the coast—except on the Niger, where Sir George Goldie's Niger Company had begun to penetrate far into Hausa country.

Colonel Ellis, of the West India Regiment, a remarkable man who had deeply studied the African people, was then commanding the troops in West Africa; and he laid his plans so as to cut off the enemy from the chance of retreat into French territory where British troops could not follow. The expedition therefore started from Sierra Leone up river by steamer, but turned, came down in the dark, and landed a hundred miles to the south, for a march of 190 miles through bush. My brother's job was to lead the advance and survey the country. When after a difficult journey the expedition reached Tekwiamia, the town which had been captured by the Sofas, they found a charnel house. Hundreds of corpses lay about, tied with ropes: they had been killed by riding horses over them, and there were pregnant women among them. But there were other dead also; and it was finally discovered that a French expedition had come down, attacked the Sofas and driven them out.

During the whole of this period, French officers, often of subaltern rank, acted very freely on their own responsibility and with little regard to diplomatic arrangements. Two envelopes found lying about disclosed that a Lieutenant Maritz had been with the attacking party. Colonel Ellis despatched a messenger to the nearest French headquarters, notifying the presence of his expedition, and warning the commander that Tekwiamia was in the British zone.

The British force now moved out again in pursuit of an enemy who were not less than four or five days' march distant. The force included a body of the African frontier police, under a European officer, West Coast natives very imperfectly trained, but its main strength consisted in two companies of the West India Regiment, coloured troops but English-speaking and Christian. The sight of the trampled corpses at Tekwiamia moved them as it would have

moved any other civilized men ; and the Old Testament began to appear in their talk as if they had been Cromwellian troops. One old sergeant said that he had sowed the good seed with bullets, and ploughed with the bayonet, and would do so again.

Their march was now through hostile country. The Sofas had come into that region on the invitation of a chief at war with the people of Tekwiama, and through his country they had now to move, down jungle paths narrow as a communication trench, with bush on each side, through which you could see no more than through a laurel hedge ; and from this cover they were intermittently sniped, with trade guns—not a formidable weapon at a distance but firing charges of “ potlegs ” (or broken metal) disagreeably at point blank. My brother, making his sketch map as he went, headed the column ; and he was hit with a potleg, slightly. No wound is negligible in that climate, but he was able to carry on. After the second day’s march, he returned some miles from the main camp to complete a piece of surveying (none of this country having been mapped before, or indeed travelled by a white man) and, starting before dawn to rejoin, heard firing. When he got back, the camp was full of dead and wounded men, and among them was Lieutenant Maritz, who had lived just long enough to explain a tragic error. Colonel Ellis’s courier had not reached him ; but he received a message from the people near Tekwiama that another enemy column was advancing, and set out with twenty-five of those Senegalese tirailleurs, with whom the French have done such amazing things in Africa. Supporting them was a native levy, but the essential damage had been done by the Senegalese. Armed with repeating rifles, they crept up through the bush to the laager and from fifteen or twenty yards opened fire on the tents of what they believed to be the Sofa camp. Panic was created among the native African police, who fired wildly in all directions and added to the casualties. But the disciplined West Indians quickly lined the stockade—though many were hit as they

stood up in going to it—and a crushing reply came. Twenty of the Senegalese were killed, as well as their European leader. Colonel Ellis had now to face a terrible problem. His column was cumbered with wounded, many of his carriers had bolted ; and there seemed every prospect that the Sofas would get word and move out. Yet he determined to push on and try to complete his task—now rendered more precarious by the fear of international complications, as they were close on the theoretical boundary. My brother's rough survey, however, placed Waima, where this tragedy had happened, within the British zone by a mile or two.

They marched, following the track down which the Sofas had marked by lopped limbs and babies with spear-thrusts. Fortunately for their purpose, every human thing had fled from the neighbourhood of these savages ; no word of the expedition passed, for no one was left to pass it. That was why they succeeded in surrounding and attacking at dawn in November, 1893. Out of some seven hundred Sofas, four hundred were killed ; close on a hundred were captured. Over six hundred captives, women and children, were liberated ; and the expedition which had been moving through a country where all fled from it, had at last the experience of seeing the natives flocking in to bless them.

This gang of land-pirates, who filed their teeth so that they made two saw-ridges in the mouth, and who fully acted up to this symbol of savage ferocity, created an impression which may be judged from one fact. A European officer came to Colonel Ellis and volunteered to take personal responsibility for hanging all who had been captured, and to carry out the sentence himself.

The column, now more encumbered than ever, set out on its laborious march for home. It had been attacked by the people of the bush ; it had been attacked by the French ; it had finally attacked and destroyed the Sofa camp. Europeans of two great nations had been involved ; English-speaking Africans, town-bred, yet full-blooded negroes, had been mixed up in this little war with the wholly undis-

ciplined natives, with the half-disciplined native police from the hinterland of Sierra Leone, and with the Senegalese, fully trained to European weapons, but marching barefoot like any other natives. (One tirailleur had accompanied the expedition from Waima and used his repeating rifle in the final encounter with glee and great effect.)

But it was not surprising that Colonel Ellis, having so many strains upon him, should be overwrought and irritable, so that his second in command, an elderly Irish major, came up to my brother, who was acting as intelligence officer: "Gwynn," he said, "I don't like bothering the colonel; but would you mind telling me, who is it we are going to fight next?"

My brother had been hit a second time in the storming of the Sofa camp, but he was still fit to march, and reconnoitre the way. He was the only European wounded on that expedition who survived; and he had the distinction of being sent home with despatches. Colonel Ellis followed by the next boat; but the effort had been too great; he succumbed to fever and died on his way home at Teneriffe.

This added to the responsibility thrown on a younger officer, not yet twenty-four, who became the principal witness in what might have been a most grave international dispute; and the exact location of Waima became of great importance. Fortunately it proved that his rough mapping, carried out under such hostile conditions, had fixed the position to within half a mile; and his work was rewarded with a brevet majority and the D.S.O.

This was a matter of great pride to us all, but most of all to my father, who could never be said to make a favourite among his children, yet who had always a special fondness for the son whose career was least like his own. I had the privilege of writing an account of the expedition for *Blackwood*, and so opening a long connection with the best of all magazines. Moira O'Neill introduced me to the editor, who was by then her friend.

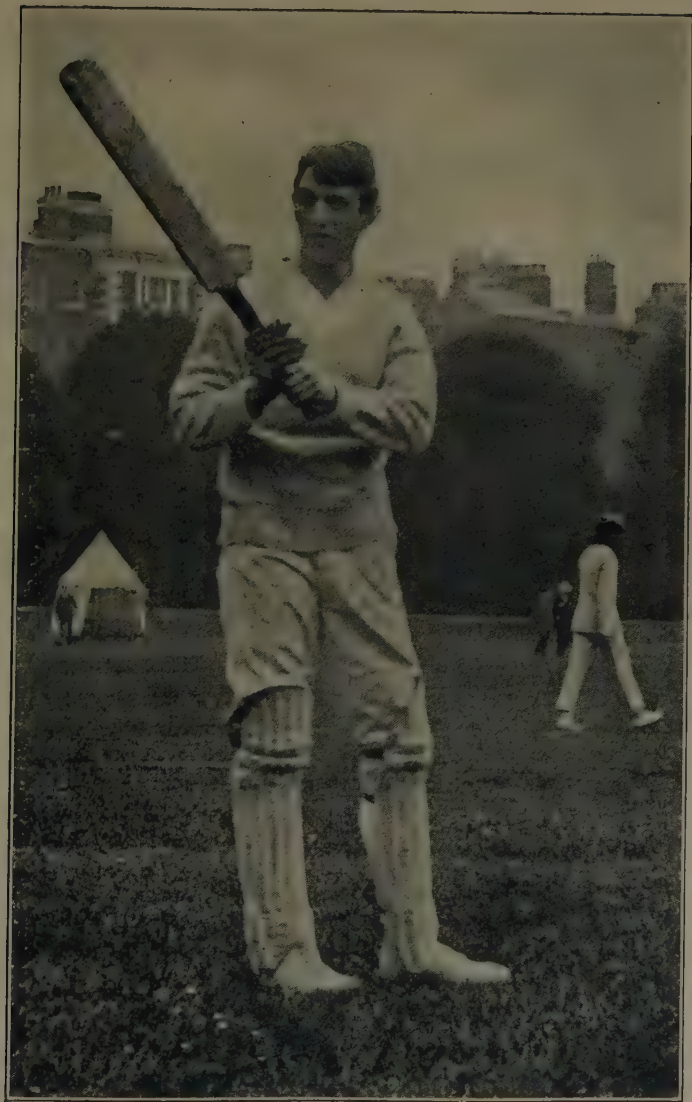
A letter of hers, written from Kildare, has this sentence:

"When I was talking to the Kennedys about your West African article, which they had read, they said it was really interesting because you were both brothers of L. H. Gwynn!"

That puts us elders in the proper focus of that time. Our chief distinction was that we were related to our younger brothers—so much younger that Lucius had scarcely, I think, even been at school with the soldier—who in his turn was six years junior to me.

But Sir John Kennedy, of Hazlethatch, was one of the chief upholders of the institution of cricket in Ireland, and he had, as Moira O'Neill said, "good reason to respect L.H.G."—then approaching the top of his fame. In the February of that year (1894), I had gone up for the day from Clifton to see Lucius play his first international Rugby match. He played five times and never on a losing side, so that he came to be regarded as the mascot of the Irish side when it was at its most brilliant period.

That period was only opening in 1894. I went down with the team to Blackheath, and nobody thought seriously of winning; the betting ran about 5 to 1 on England. Still, there were vague hopes that the Irish forwards might just possibly put an unexpected turn on things. When the two sides lined up, the English looked a stone heavier on the average, the Irish a couple of inches taller. None of our men had the heavy square shoulders and bull-dog build; but a wolfhound has a deal of strength in his quarters, and that was the type they recalled. Sure enough, in the first half, they ran away with it, keeping the ball down to the English end, till at last Lucius at three-quarters got it and started a run which I can see now: it seemed to be dead slow like a jack snipe's twisting flight, and had, I suppose, the same deceiving quality; for he slipped through a crowd and finally within three yards of the touch line passed to another who ran in. The place kick was missed, and they did not score again; and in the second half of time they had the wind against them when a bad mistake of the full back gave England a goal almost by chance. I do not remember



LUCIUS GWYNN,
IN THE COLLEGE PARK, DUBLIN.

much about the last twenty minutes, but in the last two or three the Irish forwards got away again, an Englishman dribbled the ball back, and Forrest, the Irish captain, picked it up and dropped a goal out of the middle of the rush. There never was anything more dramatic and unexpected. I can see the ball now, wobbling over between the posts ; for it was a clumsy scrambling kick, and Lucius told me that, so far as anyone knew, this famous forward had never dropped a goal before.

In the next year, 1895, Lucius reached his most admired achievement, for he made 600 runs in first-class cricket, which put him actually at the head of the season's record, with an average of over fifty. He had not played enough to be officially head of the averages—a minimum of twenty innings is needed : but his matches included *Gentlemen v. Players* in which he got top score ; it would probably have been a century but that C. B. Fry unluckily ran him out.

Arthur, his junior by a year, was playing also for Trinity and Gentlemen of Ireland. He also played in an International Rugby match. Neither he nor Lucius had great weight or speed to account for his prowess on the football field ; I should say each of them was about five feet nine and eleven stone—Arthur much the more sturdily built. Lucius looked almost delicate—and indeed, had one guessed it, there was a fundamental delicacy of the chest. But it was often noticed at the time that whereas either of them would often break away from other notable backs opposed to them, men two or three stone heavier, yet if Lucius or Arthur got his hands to these bigger, faster men, down they went. Effective strength is not merely a matter of brawn and muscle ; it lies not less in the power of nervous concentration, and above all in the instinctive timing which is a matter of rhythm, as much as a skater's or a dancer's feats. I remember once seeing Lucius bat on the Leinster ground which is very narrow ; and the bowler sent down a short one, which he pulled across, low to mid on, without any special appearance of putting his weight into it. But I never saw a cricket ball

travel so hard ; and what fixes it in my mind is the narrow escape of our old nurse, whom it missed by a matter of inches as it came by on the first bound. Her squat broad figure in its black bombazine was familiar in those days to all the cricket-going public of Dublin ; when " the boys " were playing she would take up her station before the coin was spun and not move till stumps were drawn for the day.

In the eighties when there used to be about a thousand entrants for every hundred vacancies at Sandhurst, I used often to hear elderly gentlemen—frequently elderly colonels who should have known better—declaiming against the unsatisfactory method of recruiting officers : in their opinion it would have been much better to pick young men on their athletic record.—Five years of cramming taught me that in any year a team chosen from the hundred who passed could have beaten the pick of the nine hundred rejected, at any game. Brains count ; and the kind of excellence that Lucius had comes from a ceaseless subconscious thought, like an artist's or writer's. Later on, when he was reading for fellowship in T.C.D., he gave up football, and I asked him why he did not play just to keep fit ; the loss of time would be only a couple of hours twice a week or so. He told me that it would take him off his work : in other words, if he played at all, his mind, when it was not definitely bidden to do something else, would fall automatically to working out permutations and combinations of play, inventing stratagems of passing and methods of attack. If we could see into the consciousness of Mr. " Jack " Hobbs, we should, I am sure, find it filled, even in sleep (for every writer knows that the subconscious mind is busy then) with balls of varying flight, pitch and pace, and fields of various placings, and dexterous applications of the bat to produce results.

At the beginning of 1895 I left Clifton to take up a house at my old school, St. Columba's, then higher in numbers than it had even been ; and for a year and a half I returned to being a schoolmaster—which did not please me at all. But also I returned to living in Ireland, and to country life,

which pleased me a great deal. In the summer of 1896, that way of life ended, and I went off to London to try and make my living solely by my pen—profoundly glad to be done with work for which I had no vocation.

Still I hope that in ten years I had been of some use ; and my best confirmation comes from that last spell of it at St. Columba's. Amongst other duties, I had to teach an Army class of five or six good-natured lumps of lads, singularly unproficient at all literary pursuits ; though one had some gift for mathematics. His name was Leslie Payne, and if I did not educate him, he educated me ; for we met afterwards when I had just been given a commission in 6th Connaught Rangers, and he, Major Payne, D.S.O., back from the campaign of 1914 in which our regular battalions were cut to pieces, was in charge of B. Company. Unluckily, they soon took him away to be a brigade major, but I learnt a lot from him in three or four days. Another of the class was Guy Maynard, and of his education I remember one fact. I took the Sixth and Fifth forms in English Literature, and these Army boys were thrown in. At the end of the term I examined them and to my amazement found a paper of Maynard's covering several sheets. He had written out from memory the whole *Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens* ; no one had ever told him to commit it to memory and it was not, strictly speaking, an answer to any question on the paper, and all other questions he had let alone. But I recognized that he had learnt because he had enjoyed. All this came to my mind when I went to call on a friend, the widow of one of the Rangers' best officers, and she showed me a photo of a soldier plastered over with decorations. "You know my brother," she said. "He says you were the only person who ever taught him anything." It was Guy Maynard, who had arrived at governing a huge province in the Sudan. All that I claim to have taught him is the story of Sir Patrick Spens ; but the results have added—if it were possible—to my respect for ballad poetry as an instrument of education.

CHAPTER VI

LONDON BEGINNINGS

MY wife and children stayed on in Dublin lodgings for some months, while I went to try the adventure of a literary career. Craig was then living in Gloucester Place and I got lodgings in Baker Street to be near him. He had given up cramming, and was comfortably housed and provided with full leisure for his great task, the Shakespearean Glossary, of which Sidney Lee had persuaded Smith & Elder to undertake the publication. A good deal of money had been spent on typewriting ; but as Craig said to me one day in one of his bursts of confidence, " I think God never created anybody less fit to write a dictionary." That task demands method, and Craig could make chaos in five minutes where all had been perfect order : the slips which contained his notes were all one irretrievable jumble—and what was worse nobody could read them. There never was such a script. His friends used to carry notes from him in their pockets and put heads together over decipherment as a game of skill. The first difficulty arose from his habit of introducing some word which had delighted him, and which occurred perhaps once, say, in Dekker. Now the raw material of the Glossary consisted solely of such rarities, phrases in Shakespeare that needed explanation, illustrated by parallel passages from the most out-of-the-way authors—full of interest and suggestion, but transcribed by Craig, and not he himself could read them. Specially illegible

was, as a rule, the reference (when he had remembered to put it). So, the work did not progress : and as time went on he was drawn to things more manageable. The Oxford Shakespeare which he edited at least preserves his name by an appropriate monument. When I came to London, in the autumn of 1896, he was correcting the proofs of his edition of *Elia* : it was he who ran to earth one of Lamb's previously unplaced quotations in Armstrong's *Art of Preserving Health*—a poem which probably no one else since Lamb had ever read.

Where Craig was, certain other people always were drawn and one of them was Tyrrell—with whom I had made friends during my time at St. Columba's—and not with him only, but with his family in whose company has been a lasting delight in my life. I have known many Bohemians but none so completely endued with the Bohemians' essential characteristic, a complete disregard of all standards but their own, and an absolute readiness to say at all times and to all persons exactly what they thought. What gave a special piquancy to their Bohemianism was that they were ornaments of an academic society and examples of all the domestic virtues. If qualification of this statement may be needed, it is only such as is characteristic, for households in Bohemia are habitually busy overlooking lapses in the head of the house. But Tyrrell was beloved and looked up to in his house as many more exemplary sires are not ; he was the model ; all their keen tongues were whetted after his fashion ; everything was tolerated there except what he could not tolerate—the dull. When the last of his daughters at long last condescended to marry (as her sisters had already done) a prosperous and distinguished Civil Servant, Tyrrell at the wedding spoke to an old friend. " It is a great comfort to me in my old age," he said, and the friend expected to hear of relief from financial anxieties, but Tyrrell in his deliberate polished speech finished the sentence, " to think that all my daughters have married men with a real knowledge and appreciation of the classics,"

He is generally spoken of as a great scholar ; but in the eighteenth century (to which, like so much else in Ireland, he really belonged) he would have been called a wit. The study of the classics for him was the study of two literatures at their selected period : it was little more than the study of perfect expression but it informed his whole mind and broke out in the oddest places. That autumn he dined with Craig and me and another Ulsterman, Graham the Professor of Political Economy at Belfast : and we were to walk next day. I went to fetch Tyrrell at his hotel and found him disconsolate. Wine he loved, but he had no competent stomach for it ; and on this evening the wine had disagreed with him. I suggested the usual remedy but he had already tried the hair of that dog ; and we went forth, he still disconsolate. The day turning wet, we stayed in Craig's rooms and talked—Tyrrell silent at first, but gradually joining in, till by luncheon he had fairly talked himself to a point at which he could risk a glass of whisky and soda. This time the effect was excellent, and as he stood looking out from a high window he said to me, " Whenever on an occasion like this I drink a glass of whisky and it does me good, I think of that wonderful verse in Euripides, *O Potnia Léthé tôn kakôn, hós ei sophé* : What a magician ! ah, what a magician ! " Laughter flooded through me at the complex of associations—the exquisite feeling for the Greek word, the translator's dexterous turn that suggested wizard's witchcraft, rather than philosophy—and then the application of that august beauty to such ordinary woes.

Tyrrell was never, what Craig was, a poet by appreciation: all his joys lay in the felicities of expression rather than in the soul of the work. But how he revelled in those felicities Kottabos, the Trinity College Miscellany, can show. It would be worth while to reprint his medley of contributions to it. Some of them were in English. I recall the imaginary address of a captain of the college eleven to his team in the manner of Thucydides, urging that they should take the field " using their hands in batting and bowling as if

they were their own, but in catching and fielding as if they were another's." But most of all I liked his Latin rendering of "The Song of the Shirt" which a fine instinct taught him must go rhyming. Here is Hood's

"Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements
While the wave constantly
Drops from her clothing :
Take her up instantly,
Loving not loathing."

I think Tyrrell beats that.

"*Panni gravatum
Corpus adstringunt,
Vestes elatum
Ceu funebres cingunt,
Undam stillantes
Irremeabilem :
Statis ? Amantes
Tollite amabilem.*"

That suggestion of the *irremeabilis unda*, Charon's river never to be recrossed, in the wave that drips, is absolutely the touch which all who followed Tyrrell's way of scholarship—and it was Jebb's also—strove to attain.

I rack my memory for some specimens of his sententious polished speech, but it comes only through another mouth. Not long ago his daughter sat in our drawing-room and I beheld one of the most voluble talkers in all Dublin sit dumb as she dealt out her sentences. A name cropped up : what was she really like ? "One of Nature's fishwives—lacking nothing to complete her but the emblem of her craft—the gut board." When that final Aristophanic phrase emerged, the precise, deliberate, finished articulation dropped it off the tongue, as if the object were presented for inspection, and I could hear Tyrrell's trick of voice reproduced by Tyrrell's daughter. As for the voluble talker, he sat up and clapped his hands.

Tyrrell put a solid lump of work in my way that autumn.

He was editing a series of school texts for Messrs. Blackie and asked me to do the *Odes* of Horace. He liked the result but said it was the kind of edition a man might do on a desert island; and in fact I had consulted nothing but my pocket text, and think I was right. Young students don't want to be bewildered with an array of authorities; they should be told what a thing does mean; and I knew my Horace in those days nearly as well as Craig knew his Shakespeare.

Some of my work for the *Guardian* which began at this time had to do with classical scholarship. Old Mr. Lathbury, the editor, belonged to the school which still liked to maintain a contact with their Latin and Greek: and he who had a hospitable mind for any criticism that was written with enjoyment. He himself was one of the best writers in that type of journalism of which Hutton and Townsend on the *Spectator* were the great examples. He had not their force of personality, but I always think of him with them (indeed, he wrote a good deal for the *Spectator*) and knew him more as a friend than they. He and his wife (a daughter of Professor Bonamy Price the economist) were as pleasant hosts as could be found in all London.

The *Guardian* of course was a paper for which I had no obvious fitness, and I dare say one of the reasons why its proprietors removed Lathbury from the editorship (as they did a couple of years later) was because they thought he gave far too much space and attention to merely lay literature such as mine. On the other hand, the *Spectator* suited me, and I suited it, in many ways, very well, so that it was a natural field for me. Yet there was favouring kindness shown me there, of which I keep grateful memory. Till I came to London, my only personal contact with the editor had been a call on Mr. Hutton, whom I found, as everyone else did, rather gruff and intimidating; a big, untidy, brown-bearded man, with a curious way of carrying his head so that his nose was in the air. But he sent me away with a book to review and his note later about what I wrote conveyed not only

encouragement ; its few words gave one the sense that he had pleasure in giving approbation ; and in this it was entirely characteristic. His gruffness was the mask of a nature acutely sensitive to all personal contacts. By the summer of 1896, I had done enough casual work for the *Spectator* to justify me in informing him that I was coming over to work for a living. Nothing was promised me, but that week a short story of mine in the *Cornhill* was picked out to be the peg on which to hang a sub-leader. So dexterously and thoughtfully can help be given.

Hutton wrote the article, but possibly the suggestion for it may have come from St. Loe Strachey, who was then editing *Cornhill* ; and him I met first that autumn—thirty years ago. There is no journalist living with whom I have had more to do, and none from whom I have more vehemently differed. If ever an editor was tried by a contributor, he was by me ; and I may be allowed to say now after thirty years that I never hope to find another man in whom good nature can so easily rise to generosity, and yet not be sloppy. His work never had the academic finish and the close texture of what came from the two older men, whose assistant he then was : he always tended to straggle. Yet latterly when a lot of people, myself included, were trying to say something complete and apt in a score of printed lines, I found Strachey doing this rather difficult trick better than anybody else in that array of competitors.

Mr. Townsend was a fierce old man, wizened and dried up by long residence in India : a vivid and intense talker, able to put into his writing a pictorial quality which I never found elsewhere in the paper. Hutton's mind held only ideas, not images : and Strachey, though he abounded in illustrations for purposes of argument, had not this gift of making one see in a flash.

But all three men had read and thought immensely on a vast variety of subjects : and they produced incomparably the best weekly I have ever seen, and the most influential, for it was read with care. Nowadays, the Sunday papers

with their improved distribution have cut the ground from under the older organs; but their mixture of news and comment, is, I think, less potent in forming opinion, and they are treated as dailies. The *Spectator* was read all through the week; being only comment, it did not seem so quickly out of date.

I am proud to have worked for it in those days and not the least part of my gratitude is owed to the fourth man on its regular staff, C. L. Graves. Nothing struck me more in my beginnings than the mutual helpfulness of men in a profession which has a name for jealousy: but that brilliant journalist was the most sedulous of all to give the beginner a chance to get his foot in. I was his cousin, it is true, in about the fifth degree; it mattered more that I was an Irishman: but what really mattered was that I needed help. Heaven knows to how many editors he wrote on my behalf, and it was through his mediation that J. E. Vincent, then editing the *National Observer*, welcomed me. That was a pleasant paper, adorned by weekly verses from Owen Seaman—then also in his early stages. But it had the weakness of constitution which afflicts all such organs, and I helped to kill it: the first (or nearly the first) of a score of such funerals as have had me among the mourners.

Dailies had little use for my wares, with one exception: the *Pall Mall Gazette* still kept the scholarly tradition which Harry Cust had given it, and a good deal of my more decorative prose found room there: and presently I was told to do a weekly column of "Literary Notes." One memory connected with that has always amused me. I habitually reviewed the books on Shakespeare, of which a new one appears on an average every two months: and the latest had applied the cryptogram solution to the epitaph on Shakespeare's tomb. Construed by this key, the lines read "Francis Bacon wrote the Shakespeare, Peile, Greene and Marlowe plays." I put a summary note saying that this demonstrated once and for all that the cryptogram must

be nonsensical, since it produced nonsense. Later came a note from the editor, Sir Douglas Straight, asking me to call; and it appeared that Mr. Astor the proprietor was a stout Baconian and wanted me to purge my contempt. So I put the case before Straight who agreed that the nonsense was nonsense, but said something must be done. I could only suggest that Mr. Astor should review the book himself: and later I saw, with much amusement, half a column proclaiming the interest and importance of this literary revelation.

Meanwhile I was beginning to make acquaintances and friends. One of the first was Miss Althea Gyles, then doing pen and ink drawings with a line as elaborate as Aubrey Beardsley's: admirable work, but very little of it got finished. She did however accomplish a couple of book covers for Yeats, and the *Wind Among the Reeds* in its original binding was of her design: the most beautiful thing of its kind that I ever saw. She wrote verse, too, and some of her stanzas are in the anthologies. But scores of people without her talent have accomplished ten times as much, for she had what is called the artistic temperament in excess. In reality such people are potential artists who never cease to be amateurs: who believe that excellence is achieved by sitting down to work only when inspiration comes—in other words when you feel inclined, instead of going at it, day in and day out, as a billiard player practises, and so insuring that when the moment comes and you are in form, all the dexterities shall come instinctively.

I had seen a good deal of her (for she, like me, found that people were scarce in August), when there rushed in to me one day, my cousin Dora Knox, a fellow student with her at the Slade, and unravelled a story fit for Murger's *Vie de Bohème*.

Another fellow-student of theirs was the daughter of some tradesman near the Tottenham Court Road—off which Miss Gyles had her quarters: and this student had contracted alliance with a man student: marriage was pro-

jected. But at the rumour both fathers went up in the air, and the man student was turned out of his home. The girl, however, submitted to authority, and did not pine : on the contrary her appetite increased noticeably, to the joy of her parents, till it was discovered that her luncheon packet now served for two, and that half of it was daily hidden in the drapery of a statue at the Slade—where the banished young man daily collected it. (This device had been suggested by Miss Gyles.) When it became known that the forbidden attachment continued, the girl's father again exploded ; but this time he " took a curtain pole to her " and she fled. Her sister, not an art student but sympathetic, fled after her in sympathy ; they effected a junction with the young man, and all three took their way to " Althea's studio." She, after the fashion of Bohemia, agreed to take in the two girls, and Dora Knox, being in charge of her father's household, was appealed to by Miss Gyles for bedding. It was not easy to refuse anything to a lady with that pile of flame-red hair and that intensity of conviction : so Dora drew on her father's blankets. But Miss Gyles soon got bored with " strangers in the house," and the climax came when the visitors by a carelessly thrown match set fire to the paper basket and scorched her drawings. Her wrath then turned on Dora, who fetched me to the scene. I never say anything less responsible than that crew—the boy with his dark face, and the two little cockney damsels, like toy figures at a shop window, while among them stalked this red-haired priestess ministering tea and buns. On discussion, the only way out seemed to be that the couple should marry, and the unattached sister go home. The ceremony took place at a registrar's, and I only knew of it by hearsay : but it was followed by an adjournment to " Althea's studio," a bottle of sherry was purchased, and as the hostess was pouring a preliminary libation on the boarded floor, in walked, in full magnificence, Lady Colin Campbell—a patroness of the arts. She pronounced a benediction which, apparently, must have succeeded, for

the young painter went rapidly up the ladder to prosperity : and it need hardly be said, Althea Gyles knew him and his lady no more.

It was from this gifted and fantastic person that I first heard talk of Percy and Mabel Dearmer : and in that autumn I met Mabel Dearmer at Miss Gyles' studio. The Dearmers were then sharing a house with a friend in Devonport Street, and Mabel Dearmer's drawing-room was one of the centres of the " Yellow Book " set. Or perhaps rather, what had been the " Yellow Book " set, for Aubrey Beardsley was dead, and the Yellow Book, although it continued to appear, languished ; it was virtually slain by the Diamond Jubilee. Mabel Dearmer had contributed to it a few very attractive black and white drawings, but her main success as an artist had been with posters—for the artistic poster was then much in vogue. She had gone on to apply the methods of the poster—juxtaposition of flat spaces of colour—to book illustrations, and " Wymps " a child's book by Evelyn Sharp, came out that Christmas with her pictures.

Nobody could get to know the Dearmers in those days without knowing Evelyn Sharp—in those days an absurdly boyish figure, but with brown eyes bigger than grow in any boy's head. She and I had this in common that we were both familiar with the life of a large family where boys predominated ; but she never failed to emphasize that I had in all ways the luck of it : first, that I had been a boy ; next, and even more important, I had come at the top, while she had been at the tail. In those days we all called her Becky, but she generally spoke of herself as the " Little Brother." That was her attitude to life, on very many bicycling excursions and the like. I never met anybody with a jollier sense of humour, and her friends' children, but still more her friends' relations with and attitude to their children, supplied her with a deal of amusing copy.

Nowadays all this is ancient history : between it and now, there is a gulf of years in which swim up memories of

Evelyn Sharp the suffragette, coming to me the Member of Parliament, to try to get what she considered fair play for some friend who had been run in by the police—and her big eyes blazing with indignation, and her voice trembling with resentment that she should have so far demeaned herself as to ask of the enemy (for we were all that) even fair play for a friend. But on this side of the gulf is a nearer vision of Evelyn Sharp in a land suit, doing her bit (though a post-war bit) plucking gooseberries and currants against time in a market garden: and a perception that she, who was my friend and contemporary thirty years ago, is now these things to my daughter. If ever I have a grand-daughter, Evelyn Sharp will probably slip down into that generation also, leaving my Younger Generation of to-day *plantée la*. I hope so.

There were, of course, more conspicuous people than she at what she used to call "Mabel's lurid Mondays": and perhaps the most celebrated, but certainly the most conspicuous, was Richard Le Gallienne. His good looks were dazzling; the profuse black hair with a ripple in it, parted in the middle and combed out sideways in mediæval Italian fashion, set off his fine regular features and wide eyes. Beauty so obvious and so cultivated is rather disconcerting in a man, and Le Gallienne's looks were discussed in his presence as if he were some beautiful woman. Mabel Dearmer, who had then all the devilishness of a tormenting young woman, used (so she told me one day) frequently to praise the regularity of his teeth, because she thought they were a feature with which he had provided himself. But what I remember best about him is the pleasant impression his strong frank grip made when he shook hands. The foppishness was only a veneer. Still, there it was; and the first evening that I saw him, my hostess took me over to be introduced to some people, by no means of the Yellow Book set. They were Ronald McNeill and his wife. The present Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs was then very much the cut of the Oxford athlete, and did not conceal

his disapproval. "Why, because a man can write with genius, should he not wear his hair like a Christian?" The Dearmers were Socialists; McNeill, a robust Tory, soon became editor of the *St. James' Gazette*, as anti-Socialist as possible: but he and his wife continued to be friends of these friends of mine—though one did not find them at other meeting places of that coterie.

Mrs. McNeill is now only a gracious memory. Her delicate prettiness went with a serious air that somehow conveyed that she did not mind if she were not taken too seriously. Once she was laying down that "nothing mattered but one's kernel," when Mabel Dearmer, glancing at an exquisite gown, interrupted, "I think you provide your kernel with a very nice husk."

Le Gallienne's sister, less clean-cut than he but also good to look at, was another guest of these evenings, with her husband the actor James Welsh—the only man, so far as I know, who ever was taken completely to the heart of the British public after having been associated with performances of Ibsen. That stigma lasted almost ineffaceably; it branded each and all as high-brow: yet Welsh was constantly in Ibsen plays—as was natural, seeing that he was one of the most intelligent actors of his time. He played in Shaw too, and in the nineties Shaw was almost as damning: London managers refused to risk putting him on, and in those years we only saw him at the Stage Society on Sundays. To have seen Jim Welsh as the waiter in *You Never Can Tell* was an education in the refinement of comic acting: and indeed it is possible that he may have achieved the miracle of converting some manager, for this was the first of the Shaw plays that had a popular London production. When *You Never Can Tell* was put on, I assured one person who lacked neither cultivation nor a sense of humour that he could not fail to be amused; but he talked back to me about "these thin intellectuals." He went, however, and reported faithfully that a stockbroker sitting in front of him had nearly died of apoplexy from spasms of unaccustomed

laughter. Probably this listener was not used to the way in which Shaw and Welsh between them made him laugh.

They all got used to Welsh, though, more was the pity : and he played one part in *When Knights were Bold* till I honestly believe he died of it. In that stage he had gone completely out of the ken of his early associates.

The centre of this Yellow Book group was the Harland household. Harland had been editor of it at first, jointly with Aubrey Beardsley ; but Beardsley's death left him in control. There were always legends about Harland's nationality ; and certainly he was not in the least like an Englishman and his talk was influenced as much as his writing by French models. Curiously enough, while the Yellow Book flourished his work was known only to a coterie : its decay, if not its disappearance, coincided with his popular success, the *Cardinal's Snuffbox*—a thing slight in texture, but as much alive as a butterfly on a summer day : and to my mind having a spontaneity and ease which his earlier stories lacked.

All the leading ladies of his tales have a family likeness, and in a sense Mabel Dearmer sat for all of them.

Another man whose curve of popularity began to rise suddenly with Harland's was W. J. Locke—always to be found at these gatherings, though I doubt if he wrote for the Yellow Book : long, thin, and sensitive, with hands that moved much more than his face while he talked. I could not understand what about him was so unlike the rest of that society, and to me so familiar, till I discovered that he too had begun with being a schoolmaster and had escaped from that bondage. He must have written eight or ten novels with little but praise to reward him till the *Morals of Marcus Ordeyne* appeared ; and in it, a manner that had before seemed a little stiff suddenly expanded into gaiety and charm ; all came easy at once. My theory has always been that Harland in solving his own problem solved Locke's also—that his genial expansion affected the other writer. But it may have been only a coincidence of growth ; and

let there be no confusion of estimates. Whether with Harland's help or without it, Locke got into a stride that left the other far behind. I owe a debt to that novelist, for twice in my life I have had over long periods to search out what could lighten the suffering of an invalid. Reading aloud is the severest test, and I have twice read aloud *The Beloved Vagabond* with keen delight, and twice have seen it bring forgetfulness of pain to minds that were fastidious even on a sick-bed.

I permit myself to add one note about this friend, whom I have seen much less often than I should wish in the last thirty years. It concerns his umbrella, which in anybody else's hand would have seemed to me ridiculous, but with him carried out the impression of having been designed (man and umbrella to match) by Hepplewhite or some such specialist in slimness and straightness.

Max Beerbohm came to these gatherings, of course; I, at least, thought of him then as a writer, and so did the literary world in general, which delighted in his *Saturday Review* dramatic criticisms. When a man has his weekly pulpit, he becomes known by his occupancy of it to the disparagement of his more personal work. But I have never known a pulpit under which I sat so gladly, nor one from which the discourse seemed so little either of a preachment or a "turn." Once or twice when Max did not wish to criticize his brother, I deputized for him and did the notice of what was on at His Majesty's. But how I should have resented that interpolation, in my capacity as reader of the *Saturday*! I thought—and still think—that these admirable causeries were better literature, though the subject often made them ephemeral, than the work by him which appeared in the *Yellow Book*. Yet the story of Lord George Hell, whose mask finally became his face, was probably the best expression of that school on its literary side. They had the desire to express their emotions and their philosophies through fables, the more childish in form the better; to charge a toy with meaning and load Pierrot with all the

melancholy of the world; and Max took up the fashion and made out of it something much stronger and saner than the rest could approach. Nowadays we all know in what medium that powerful intelligence finds its characteristic expression; but in those days only the inner circle had even heard of his caricatures. I remember that Mabel Dearmer spoke of them: but I should say, they became only widely known in the next century, by the time that Shaw also had become generally popular.

I should like to paper the offices of the League of Nations—or better, the Chancelleries of Europe—with “Max” caricatures. No other pacifist has given such trenchancy to his attack on bullying. The other aspect of his work, interpretation of personalities through whimsical line, seems to me less important; I prefer the “Max” who sets a picture before, it may be France, or it may be Ireland, and says, “Look at your vicious self”—while every line drives in the intensity of his dislike. But there is also in “Max” the merely amused spectator, who divides mankind into two classes, the stockish and the sinuous, and decides first to which his subject of contemplation belongs. I found him once wandering in the lobbies of the House of Commons and hailed the stranger: he stayed some while, and whether he departed from me, or I from him, I have no memory, and had forgotten all about the meeting till, years afterwards, going by chance to one of his shows, was confronted by a very sinuous and bearded me, writhing about the members’ lobby, contrasted against noticeably stockish fellow-members. That is how one becomes immortal.

My own association with the Yellow Book set of people really was as one of John Lane’s authors—for I never even offered work to the Yellow Book. Lane published my first novel, first book of essays, and first book of verse—and neither of us was the richer. He was, of course, at all these gatherings—small, fat, round, and pontifical, considering himself the arbiter of literary fame. I think he had the desire to be associated with literature, rather than the feeling for

literature. His original partner, Elkin Mathews, was really the book lover of the two : and natural preference for the loser gave me more sympathy with him. I had no passion for being considered one of Lane's authors.

Two other figures, come into my memories of those London days—Maurice Hewlett and his wife—but he was certainly none of Lane's flock. They were, and they continued to be, close friends of the Dearmers and close friends of mine. My first clear impression is of her—like the jolliest kind of terrier, with her nose a little cocked in the air, and all tingling with friendly vitality. That was before Hewlett's sudden success : but a few months, or even weeks later, I remember her comical and lovable little swagger, and our laughing over it. "Yes," she said, "whenever I go into a room I look at the other women and I say to myself, 'Your husband hasn't written *The Forest Lovers*.'"

She was bubbling over with pride in her man, and well she might be. I doubt if anybody so picturesque had taken the town by storm since Byron's day. Maurice Hewlett with his crisp dark hair and strongly lined face was always the "Englishman Italianate," and he had one feature which gave a romantic and slightly formidable suggestion that he might easily be also the "devil incarnate" of the old saying. This was his mouth, with the queer twist in the upper lip that only just escaped deformity, but, escaping it, gave a notable emphasis to the face. His smile was pleasant, and frank and friendly ; but one never saw it without glimpsing the possibility of a dangerous snarl. He was a fierce and vibrant creature always, and it was this peculiar thrill which got into his writings and made their success. They had speed, they had colour, they had intensity : but into none of them did Maurice Hewlett ever get the whole of the best of himself. For he had the exuberant temperament, the passionate craving for beauty, the passionate love for justice (or rather, desire to redress wrong, and damn anything so cold-blooded as justice) allied with the richest and most varied store of knowledge I think perhaps he carried too much baggage

—could not simplify his expression, because he always saw too many things to say ; but anyhow, his literary career was an exciting and exhilarating thing to watch. He went up like a rocket, he came down like Aaron's rod ; the burnt stick blossomed into fine philosophies. Many like the philosopher better than the romancer. His trouble was that he cared about neither ; what he wanted to achieve was poetry, and in all his nine or ten volumes of verse he never brought it off. Yet there are long passages in his *Village Wife's Lament* which may well outlast the memory of anything he wrote in prose.

None else of my friends achieved so sudden a prosperity through letters as Hewlett. The first sign was when the author bought his publisher's house ; for the Hewletts took over their abode in Northwick Terrace from Sir Frederick Macmillan—and we all went to see how she had converted a London drawing-room into some kind of Moorish saloon—by lavish use of poker work. On the whole I sympathize with the feelings which Lady Macmillan expressed to me about that transmutation. But then came Broadchalke, the lovely old mansion among the Wiltshire downs, with its mullioned windows, its cedars on the lawn, its little river in which I fished (very badly) with the dry fly, and its garden on which money was spent like water ; and money spent on flowers does at least always show return.

Broadchalke is where I remember him best. We walked the downs far, and talked perhaps more about politics (for I was then in Parliament) ; but we came often to his work, and his censure of it. I had read a thing called *The Spanish Jade* coming down in the train. " Oh, that fake ! " he said contemptuously. But the *Forest Lovers* had become " a fake " also. Yet his central thought was never, I understood, to be allowed direct expression ; that would be wearing one's heart on the sleeve. He referred to some verses of mine about Ireland. " I couldn't write like that," he said. " I should feel I was giving myself away." His essay on Mythology explains him a good deal : there should

be a sort of Eleusinian language of the mysteries, and all should be taught this, so that all may understand the poet's thought in the sole medium proper for poetic expression. A poem, he thought, should be as impersonal as a statue or a picture, which never says to you in so many words, "This is what I feel," yet conveys what is felt to those who have comprehension.

He dealt with money as I think an artist should ; when it came to him, he spent it on things of nobility and beauty, without ever weakening his love for those central simplicities in which the highest nobility and the highest beauty reside : and when the money went away, he turned his back on the pleasant accessories and went serenely back to the essentials—more serene than at any other time.

Her interests and his went apart, and eventually separated them ; but the last time that I remember to have seen either of them, I saw both : he was producing a play and his old life-comrade was there in the box to applaud on the first night. I heard from him later, at times during the War ; the only note I have kept replies to rejoicings over the news that his son, reported lost in an air raid on Kiel Harbour, had been safely picked up. And I have a letter from her, replying to what I wrote after the papers told that Hewlett, whom I was just hoping to see again, had died suddenly. Gallant people were these two ; life with them was a spirited and courageous business.

They were friends also from early days of other and similarly pleasant friends of mine—though I do not recall meeting the Hewletts and the E. V. Lucases together. Lucas and I were doing much the same kind of miscellaneous work, and probably the *Cornhill Magazine* brought us into touch. Strachey had left it, when on Mr. Hutton's death he became joint editor of the *Spectator* with old Mr. Townsend ; and Charles Graves succeeded Strachey on the *Cornhill*—acting however under the direction of Reginald Smith, Mr. Alexander Murray Smith's son-in-law and partner. Great were the lamentations of Charles Graves

over the taboo imposed on him by Reginald Smith's meticulous propriety. "Stays" had occurred in an accepted manuscript and must be obliterated; the question was what to put instead. "Corset?" Reginald Smith did not "quite like corset," as a term for the *Cornhill's* pages. This tall, lantern-jawed man had been a barrister, and had brought from the practice of the law a desperate sense of caution. But he was the most courteous and kindly soul, and his communications to all authors were couched in charming language: and women always thought him the most perfect of all publishers. Men (Lucas and I, for instance) were more impressed by his standard of hospitality. There used to be Cornhill dinners at his house, where the table was always decorated with orange flowers, approximating to the colour of the *Cornhill's* cover. I walked away from the first of these with E.V.—who was smoking a fifteen-inch cigar—and his first word was that the good cheer had been almost excessive. We agreed that neither of us had ever seen such a meal.

The kindred subjects of eating and drinking are inseparably connected with all my recollections of this delightful writer and companion—*et pour cause*. He had married a woman with a genius for cooking. My first impression of her is vaguely of something very slim and shy in white muslin at a dinner-party of the Reginald Smiths'; my second is clearer, because my wife and I went to call and we found these people characteristically installed in a place of beauty and interest—one of the old houses in St. James' Street, Bloomsbury. Audrey Lucas was then in long clothes: and the shy young woman (I suppose in blue linen, for I scarcely ever saw her then in anything else) was less shy on her own ground, and with twinkling eyes recounted to us the visit of her last caller—who had been a lady, icily august. Just before the bell rang, a mouse was detected, and the householders had pursued and slain it with the stroke of a bath towel: the door opened, the visitor was announced, and there were mouse and bath towel in full

view But the guest was too well bred to allude to these objects, the hosts too shy (they were both at this time easily tongue-tied) and so conversation continued, discouragingly, in the presence of the remains—of which all the conversers were acutely aware.

Some time after that, we were invited down to Froghole. There was a Quaker strain in the Lucas household and E.V. had some of the Quaker's nice acquisitiveness. Already before he was earning anything appreciable, they had become possessed of a cottage and its plot of ground. I suppose there are a score of people living who would sign a declaration that it was the most delightful cottage ever known: and some of them are terribly distinguished.

Froghole is a hamlet on the south slope of the North Downs, about half-way between Westerham and Edenbridge; so that it looks across the Kentish weald to the South Downs that swell up from all that chequered greenery, on which red roofs make splashes of rich colour. The Lucases lived in what was then rather a track than a lane (now it is a high-class motor road leading to many new villas): and the cottage was a double one, which had been two labourers' dwellings—very old with great black oak beams, against which a head bumped badly; there was a raised stone terrace at the door, and a path of red tiles led straight from the door down the garden, on a steep incline. There was a very old yew tree, a monstrous old apple, and at the bottom a thicket of hazels, bearing good cobnuts. The ground had been tilled and manured by generations of cottagers, and anybody could have made things grow there. But nobody in my life-long experience has shown me a garden to match what that lady made there. Everything was in its place, and nothing seemed to have been put there on purpose—except of course the wide border on each side of the path. The potato patch indeed was out of sight, away down at the bottom; but fruit and flower garden had no division. One of the great regrets of my life is that my mother never saw it. She heard enough about it, and some of her cherished

Isabella lilies were sent off there, I think. But she would have recognized at once that such a garden as that, so intimately personal, is never a paid gardener's work. She herself would have liked, but never had the strength or the leisure to do, what was done by those skilful hands and foreseeing eyes.

E.V. contributed the admiration.

I think it must have been the first time that we stayed there that I opened the lattice window and saw the slender figure of our hostess in its blue linen and white sun-bonnet stooping over the strawberries which she was picking for our breakfast ; it would be hard to imagine a pleasanter incarnation of the morning. It was the perfect household to stay in, especially at that time, because the mistress of the house did her own cooking. Later, as prosperity increased, there was a cook ; and the things we ate, good as they were, had no longer the same personal touch. Even those who had been most spoilt by that household accepted this with resignation : but one thing I have never forgotten or forgiven. They inherited from the cottier forerunners an asparagus bed, from which came such asparagus as I never hope to see this side of Paradise ; stout and tender as the stoutest and tenderest that France ever grew, yet not blanched—as in France it always is—but green as the grass and having over and above the taste of asparagus the taste of green growing things. When next year I came back I enquired anxiously how the asparagus was promising, and I learnt that it had been dug up to make way for some flowering shrubs. That was the only inartistic thing I ever knew the Lucas family to do.

What I remember about the cottage itself is chiefly the homely lowness of the rooms, a clutter of books everywhere, on the walls whitewash wherever there was not black oak ; and on the big overmantel, a few scraps of blue Egyptian pottery.

Many long walks I took there, with both or either of them, out along Crockham Hill, or by the ridge eastward

where Mr. Winston Churchill has now established himself ; many an armful of flowers I carried back to London, and once I remember a great bag of plums slung on my bicycle. But there was also cricket—in which I never distinguished myself. I think E.V. attained to being captain of the Crockham Hill Club ; and communications from him in summer generally included the state of his average. Brothers of mine came also to that so hospitable house : and probably it was I who introduced Craig there. He became an institution—God knows how many of us were that. But when Craig died and many people of note assembled to pay him the last tribute of their regard, Lucas wrote about *A Scholar's Funeral* one of the best and most moving of all his essays.

These were the only friends whom I knew as country folk : though when the Dearmers moved to Hampstead I helped a good deal in the making of two very jolly town gardens. But otherwise my friends were friends of town life. Violet Hunt came early into the list of them. People accused her of a dangerous tongue ; I never knew it to be more than pleasantly malicious : but how quick ! Once when somebody else knocked over a teacup, Violet Hunt shot a glance at my wife, " Mistress of herself though china fall," said she ; and we shared her own delight in the pat quotation

She wrote to me one day that Lady Margaret Sackville, just then beginning to try her hand at poetry, wanted to meet Yeats : could I take them to his rooms on the evening (I think, Wednesday) when he was always at home ? It was settled and then I learnt that the lady's family insisted on sending the poetess (then a very slender delicate and picturesque young woman) in their family brougham, which would pick up us, her escort. The elderly coachman looked a good deal puzzled when I told him to drive to Woburn Buildings, or rather to the mouth of that cul-de-sac, for into it you cannot drive. After some difficulty we found the entrance, got out, knocked at the cobbler's shop and

were admitted into the big dark room. Several people were there, and among them I think, Florence Farr, who at that time was speaking Yeats' verse to a vague accompaniment on some stringed instrument which Arnold Dolmetsch had created. All went on as usual: as usual, Yeats talked extremely well of the things that interested him: but about eleven, there came a knock at the door and the cobbler's wife with a frightened face entered saying there was a man below wanting to know what had happened to Lady Margaret Sackville. I was asked to go down and reassure the retainer, and I found in the alley the cockaded footman standing sentry at the door, but like a martyr at the stake: for about him swarmed all the brats and urchins from the surrounding tenements who had never seen the like of him before and were determined to make the most of their opportunity. I reported to this effect: but that fragile young lady had a stony heart and left him there in purgatory for another hour while she and the major poet discussed matters pertaining to their art.

Yeats himself would have been equally uncompassionate. Perhaps a certain hardness goes to the making of a poet; for she has made one.

Another acquaintance of my early years in London was A. H. Bullen, the scholar-publisher through whom whole volumes of the most beautiful Elizabethan and Jacobean lyrics were brought back into the sunlight which was their element. Campion in especial might have said to him, "Thou hast bestowed on me a second life; for this I live thy creature." Bullen was, like all other Elizabethan students, a friend of Craig and I am sure that Craig first introduced me to these re-gatherings of buried beauty. It was from Craig also that I heard the legend of Bullen's old father, who began life as a cattle drover at Clonakilty in County Cork, and ended it as Keeper of the Printed Books in the British Museum—by what intervening stages I know not. But I met the old man once with his son, and he kept the look of a stout rough Irish cattle dealer. He transmitted

to his son the taste for books and for the make-up of books (A. H. Bullen was a most skilful director of printing); but also the taste for whisky, of which he consumed a bottle daily. Unhappily he did not transmit the constitution which enabled him to survive this regimen to the age of eighty—and which no doubt inspired him in his last years to marry again and disinherit the son with whom he had quarrelled. A. H. Bullen was nervous, thin and excitable as compared with that stout old warrior, and had not the talent for prospering commercially. He did not succeed as a general publisher, though one book which he published might have laid the foundation of a business. I called on him one day and he gave me an advance copy of a prose story by Moira O'Neill, of which he thought very highly, and told me to take also another volume of fiction published the same day. I went to the British Museum and while waiting for my books to be fetched, glanced at the new author. Very soon I began to be afraid of being turned out, for I could not restrain my laughter. It was Mr. Jacob's *Many Cargoes*. I believe in my heart that Bullen almost resented the success of what he so strangely under-valued, especially when it was matched with the failure of what he liked.

I had not the chance to review *Many Cargoes*, and indeed few adventures ever came my way in that branch of work. But once in those months of beginning I made the loudest trumpeting I could about a romance which seemed to have extraordinary imaginative and descriptive power. It was called *The Spirit of Storm*, a book about buccaneers and tornadoes in West Indian waters. The author's name was Ronald Ross, and the book had no success. After that, as I was pursuing the line of interest in West African affairs which my brother's experience had opened up, the name became very familiar in quite another setting; until at last knowing that Professor Ronald Ross, who had discovered the part played by a mosquito in carrying malaria, had served in the West Indies, I wrote off to him, and found that he

was author not only of this but of an earlier romance called *A Child of Ocean*, as well as of a little book of verse and a treatise on pure mathematics. The mathematics, pure or impure, said nothing to me ; the verse was rather dry ; but I continue to hold that *The Spirit of Storm* had more of Victor Hugo's quality than anything I ever saw in English—with this addition that the writer had (literally) enjoyed great opportunities of seeing what a tornado is like.

When I began to "advise publishers" as the phrase is, I pressed on them the advisability of reviving the dramatic tale which had so powerfully affected me, but none was willing. Now that Sir Ronald Ross is world-famous, I renew the suggestion.

Most of the work of this kind which I did was for the house of Macmillan, to whom I first became known as contributor to their Magazine. It was then edited by Mowbray Morris who was unique in my experience of editors, and indeed of literary men. Personally, he corresponded to my notion of a "buck," as that word was used some seventy years ago. No other mortal known to me wore a top hat with so florid curves, and the sheen of it was opulent. His coats, I am sure, were always braided : everything about him recalled the smartness of a time when men wore side whiskers. He was an extravagant version of the man about town, resuscitated from some earlier generation. And this mixture of old-fashioned ways with a complete assurance that they embodied the last word of style went into his literary work. I believe he was the last editor who systematically treated the manuscripts of contributors as exercises submitted for his correction. In the days to which he belonged temperamentally, an editor really was an editor ; and I am not sure but such an editor was a very useful institution. Mowbray Morris would send work back, demanding this or that alteration, and quite frequently making suggestions. I have often heard writers complain of such conduct as insolence, but my dignity was less sensitive ; I never saw a letter from him that was not witty in phrasing, and that

reconciled me to much; and besides his criticisms were often well founded. If he reported correctly, Mr. Kipling must have taken the same view of him: for some of Mr. Kipling's early stories appeared in Macmillan's and were—at least so Mowbray Morris assured me—submitted to much castigation.

Of course in writing for a paper such as the *Spectator* then was, where nothing was signed and there was editorial responsibility for every line, no contributor had a right to grumble if things were left out. It was not quite the same when patches were interpolated—as often happened if I were writing about Shaw or Meredith, or some such author, whom Strachey regarded with suspicion. The patches showed. I was a meek contributor, at all events, about that kind of thing: but once, perhaps in reprisal, I ended up an article in the paper with a quotation which very probably not one reader would identify as the concluding words of Maupassant's story *La Maison Tellier*. But I knew that if even one reader did, he or she would realize the chuckle with which I quoted that classic on that page. I do not believe I should have done it in Mr. Hutton's day: I could not have faced a wiggling from that old man. But Strachey was my contemporary and the paper so prosperous that it tempted malice—in a friendly way. Everybody said when Mr. Hutton died that the circulation would fall to nothing. On the contrary it jumped up. Strachey's exuberant Anglo-Saxonism suited the temper of the Diamond Jubilee period.

About this time the *Spectator* was made into a limited liability company and regular contributors were allowed the privilege of acquiring a limited number of shares at their face value—and a very considerable privilege it was. My wife's mother kindly provided the means for me to invest £500.

At that time, though I had no definite or salaried position I was nearer to being enlisted on the staff of a paper than I ever was again: and no doubt it would have worked out so, but for fatalities. But as things befell, though I have

been a regular contributor to many journals, none has ever employed me on its staff. Free lance journalist I began, and free lance I remained: I have often wondered why.

Of course, I wrote an inordinate deal, much of it about nothing in particular. One old impression of first acquaintance with the British Museum Reading Room preserves a story which I had forgotten and which pleases me. I was then looking for lodgings and had nearly settled to take a room in a little private hotel facing the Museum railings, much frequented by savants and scholars. But trouble came when I asked for a latchkey. That hotel owned a clientèle which had no use for latchkeys. I urged my necessities but the host answered firmly: "There are two men who may have a latchkey for this house: myself and the Bishop of London." That was in Dr. Creighton's day: I doubt very much if the present occupant of the See inherited the privilege, for he is not among the Biblical scholars who made this their special retreat. But I could not complain, since the Archbishop of Canterbury was by implication included in the exclusion.

I find also some notes on a French discussion about women's bicycling costume, in which nearly all the ladies condemned the *costume viril* as an unwisely prodigal expenditure of the sex's reserves. But they agreed that if man disliked the woman *en culotte*, the woman *en culotte* would disappear. And I suppose that the ultimate verdict of man was foreseen by a poet: for M. Stéphane Mallarmé anticipated what has happened: "If," he wrote, "their object is to show their legs, I would rather that the revelation proceeded from under a short skirt, which keeps a vestige of the feminine, than from a tomboyish knickerbocker." Mallarmé was an obscure symbolist in verse, but his prose put the matter very plain.

On the whole, however, I was in the main a critic—practising at the same time the arts of verse and prose fiction which I criticized—and still I think it is well that a critic should try his own hand at what he judges. I find also

that I still passed for young, though close on forty and father of six children. A letter from Gosse, pleased about something I had written in *Literature* about him and his work, has the sentences, "We are so shy of your generation, we quasi-greybeards! You seem so much more formidable than we elders and our contemporaries." Quarter of a century has passed, and, handy dandy, who is the greybeard now? Not Sir Edmund Gosse—my contemporary. But I too know now the nervousness he spoke of, in the presence of those formidable people, the generation that is not his or mine. In short there are only two regiments, the young and the not young. Middle aged is a term invented by the not young to salve their feelings.

Some of Edmund Gosse's generation had, I think, made up their minds that I was not only young but uppish; as I learnt by a sudden onslaught. An article in *Cornhill* called *The Decay of Sensibility* provoked it. Miss Austen was of course one of the chief documents about this quality, which I analysed, so to say, statistically, by the number of swoons recorded in the leading novels of her day, and in my opening paragraph I said that there were dead authors to whom I should like to pay personal homage, but that I never wanted to meet Miss Austin in paradise. For this, Andrew Lang and Mr. Walkley flew at me and to judge by the reverberations they must have flown in several papers: I was their text to such a degree, that for years every notice of any article or book by me began "Mr. Gwynn who does not like Jane Austen"; "Mr. Gwynn, although he does not like Jane Austen," and so on. I went off to my editor to ask leave to make rejoinder, and Reginald Smith was cautious as usual; but in came old Mr. Murray Smith, the head of the firm, who had been Charlotte Brontë's publisher (and I was declaring for Charlotte Brontë as against Jane Austen). "A fight—certainly let's have a fight," he said. "A fight is always a good thing." And so we had our war, and I parried and riposted with great enjoyment. Mr. Walkley was not mollified but there came a letter from

Andrew Lang beginning, "This is a flag of truce." And an enchanting letter it was. There are two or three more among my papers, all of them having the queer suggestion of nervous shyness which his handwriting always gives: but all more than a little friendly. Indeed, it would be strange, if he and I had quarrelled over literature, for there was never a critic in my day on whose word I would so confidently have ordered a book. From the practice and literature of angling to the ballad and the epic, from the good yarn to the wittily-turned triolet, he produced and praised the things that pleased me best. Yet when I met him once or twice, the nervous shyness was always a bar: and I cannot but think that he was consciously unhappy because of this defect (for it was a defect) and can only have been companionably at his ease with few people and those only after very long contact. In a drawing-room, and still more on a platform when he lectured, he had a trick of swinging his long body from the hips, side to side, as if groping with his head—just as a caged polar bear does. But what a writer in his own class! Much of his work that was published unsigned in the *Daily News* came near to be the perfection of the *causerie*. And once or twice, not only in the sonnets about Homer (which everyone of taste knows by heart) but in stray passages of his poems, his verse rose into full, pure and clear song.

Somewhere just before the actual close of the nineteenth century, a new large untidily spherical planet swam into our ken. G. K. Chesterton as a young man was even more like the good-natured giant of children's books than he is now, well on in the fifties. Everything about him lent itself to genial caricature—even the companion figure of his household, so oddly contrasted with his rotund bulk. There never were people who could stand such mockery better than this brilliant couple, who in those days had a flat in Battersea Park—a place then known to almost all the women-folk as the scene of their recent instruction in bicycling. Whether it really was tinier than other flats, I do

not know, but it seemed a miracle that Mrs. Chesterton could get its door to shut so as to enclose her husband—let alone all the people who wanted to come there of an evening.

I have never been able to get over my feeling that Chesterton presents to the world the figure of a monk whose rule does not prohibit marriage: some kind of jolly friar, suitably and legitimately companioned. Perhaps it was the fitness of the habit. Once the experiment was made of putting on laymen to preach during the luncheon hour at a church in Covent Garden (it was, I think, one of Percy Dearmer's ideas) and we all went to hear Chesterton. Of what he said I have not the least memory, but I remember well that the amplitude of his black gown filling the pulpit made a group of majestic lines from which his huge head rose appropriately; and I saw for the first time its beauty. The advance of time, or rather the continual play of generous thought and witty expression, have made this decorative quality obvious to all; but it would have been quite easy to think Chesterton ugly, as a young man. Laughable of course he always was: one of the Creator's lovably humorous inventions; but endowed with the gift of seeing better than anyone else the fun of himself.

These are the experiences of a literary man, and I recall vividly one trait of G.K.C. which may perhaps interest only those who dabble in writing (though God knows that gives my story a wide enough public). The Macmillans had attached me to their staff as a supernumary literary adviser—John Morley (not yet Lord) being of course their adviser in chief: and I advised strenuously that this new essayist should be let do Browning in the English Men of Letters series, of which the firm were rightly proud. It was so settled, and I thought no more of it, till one day old Mr. George Craik, their senior partner, sent for me. There he was, in fury, with Chesterton's proofs before him, asking me why I had let them in for a piece of work which would disgrace the establishment if it were not thrown on the scrap-heap

at once. The cause of this indignation was then set before me—a quotation from *Caliban* fourteen lines long, and thirteen of the lines containing errors which Chesterton had not corrected. It was a further proof of his vicious incompetence that such corrections as he had made were in pencil. I took away the proofs and went through them, coming incidentally on one four-lined stanza from a Border Ballad, quoted for purpose of illustration. Three lines of the four were Chesterton's version of what he remembered: the fourth corresponded to the received text. Undoubtedly Mr. Craik had ample grounds of complaint: but not less certainly, to my mind, the book was a better book than any publisher had a right to anticipate. So between admiration and righteous wrath and amusement, I wrote to Chesterton and received a reply which was like the trumpeting of a beaten and conscience-stricken elephant. The proof was recorrected (probably by Mrs. Chesterton) the book appeared and was received as it deserved. I remember in particular a review by Lang, whom I should not have expected to like either Browning or his commentator. But it praised not only the acuteness of the criticism but the beauty and the wisdom of many of the things said: and it gave to me the very keen pleasure which most writing people experience when they see a friend's work commended better than they could have done it themselves. Mr. Craik was delighted with the discrimination he had shown in his promotion of that young author.

This same roving commission employed me at times on interviewing writers who thought of pitching their tent in the Macmillans' camp: and Mr. Wells was one of them. He talked at length, and very well, about his work as a whole, expounding the relation of its several parts. There were the essays social and scientific in which he wrote his opinions, explicitly addressing the public of trained minds, with a view to the advancement of knowledge and the application of knowledge to social needs. Then there were the fairy tales, in which constructive imagination, working

on the suggestion of science, hinted to the general uneducated public the possibilities of knowledge. *The Food of the Gods* for example was a parable of what knowledge can do to break up existing social institutions and replace them by others, more scientific. Finally there were the novels—and *Kipps* was the novel in hand—which displayed human beings avid for knowledge and painfully crippled and distorted and dumbled by the lack of it. Taking the work as a whole, it was an organized campaign or propaganda in the interests of Science for the diffusion of knowledge.

As I left Mr. Wells, I happened to mention that I had to go and see Yeats on a similar affair. Instantly Mr. Wells crinkled up his nose, as a dog does at the sight or sound of another whose odour and associations are unsympathetic, "Yeats!" he said, "Yeats doesn't like Science."

I did not discuss the contemptuous tone or what it implied, but went my way and having found Yeats, mentioned from whom I came. Allowing for the difference of nose, Yeats made precisely the same instinctive wrinkling movement. "Wells!" he said. "That man has a mind like a sewing machine." It was not adequate as a description: no expression of deep-seated temperamental dislike ever can be: it did not allow for the human sympathy, the compassion for the defects of training where there is something that desires to be educated to beauty, or the tenderness towards whatever yearns after active adventure and new horizons: it did not allow, in short, for the power to create Mr. Hoopdriver, Kipps and Mr. Polly, and the worlds they move in. But as an image to convey the high-wrought complicated structure, the hard mechanical well-oiled efficiency, which are the qualities and defects of Mr. Wells's intellect, Yeats's phrase would be hard to beat;

CHAPTER VII

LONDON IN THE BOER WAR PERIOD

ALONG with my miscellaneous attempts in literary journalism and book writing, there has run always some work as a publicist: and the first line of it to develop arose out of my interest in West African adventures and politics. These reached an acute phase in the years between 1896 and 1898; and my brother was at this time placed at the Intelligence Office, so that I was in the way to hear discussion. It was difficult to get leave to write because the general public knew and cared nothing about the subject and most editors reflected that state of mind. On the other hand, there was scarcely a working journalist in London who had learnt the first thing about West Africa and I had few competitors. Lady Lugard, who was then Miss Flora Shaw, could scarcely be described as a working journalist; but she kept the *Times* informed; E. D. Morel, then working in an office in Liverpool, had his own sources of knowledge which he used very ably; but I think that he, like myself, had no definite attachment to any paper. Most of his articles, however, went to the *Morning Post*, though some appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, for which, as the situation developed, I also wrote a good deal.

Before 1896 the British had secured control of the region from Lake Tchad to the Niger, including the great semi-barbaric towns of Bornu, Kano and Sokoto, and also the populous Hausa and Yoruba cities. But the defeat of the

Fulah empire had not been accomplished directly by British Imperial troops: it was the forces of the Niger Company that met with modern rifle fire these charges of mail-clad horsemen, equipped like the Saracens of Cœur de Lion's day. Chartered Companies were in a position of doubtful security after the Jameson Raid: France evidently still hoped to wrest a good deal from the control of this authority whose international right seemed more challengeable than that of a government manned by nominees of the Colonial or Foreign Office. And so French adventurers pushed furiously on in the regions enclosed by the huge bend of the Niger—feverishly anxious to establish a post on its banks to which there could be direct access by water from the sea.

In the process, they had many wars, but the chief of their antagonists was still Samory—who, hunted from both sides, was in collision with both French and English. Over and above these main movements were local disturbances, especially in Sierra Leone, where a project of a railway towards the interior occasioned a demand for new taxation, and the imposition of a hut tax led to a native rising.

Throughout all this time, Marchand with General Mangin for his second in command was pushing across from the Congo to the Upper Nile—where, as all know, he established himself at Fashoda. But also all along the European line a new fight was developing against the various pests that made West African possessions almost untenable for white men. The campaign against the mosquito had been launched. On the other hand, with all this movement of many forces back and forwards across Africa, diseases that had before been local now spread far and wide: and the sleeping sickness, starting from the interior, began to appear almost on the coast.

The Colonial Minister of those days was Mr. Chamberlain, and Herbert Read, my friend from Brasenose, shared to the full the enthusiasm which that great administrator created in his subordinates. Mr. Chamberlain had realized the part

which Science must play in African development, and the School of Tropical Medicine at Liverpool had his support. Read was the official in charge of this business, and it had ramifications in London, where Sir Patrick Manson was doing work comparable with that of Ronald Ross. In the process of keeping myself informed on Africa, I saw Read frequently ; and he suggested to me one day that I should go with him, under Manson's guidance, to see cases of sleeping sickness.

They were in the Charing Cross Hospital, and we entered the long ward, all so trim, with the whiteness of sheets everywhere, and under the white sheets chests and arms showing conspicuous in red flannel. But far away at the end of the double line of cots the two black faces made a violent contrast. Coming nearer, we saw the gleam of their teeth, the yellow of their eyes and the whitish grey of their palms. They lay there, pathetic figures, dreadfully strange : one of them, a boy in his teens, had the scared look of a trapped animal. Even in his drowsiness there was alarm. The elder, a man about thirty, spoke lethargically, and had evidently reasoned himself into tranquillity : yet one could feel the quivering revolt underneath. He was a Christian and a chief's son, and he had come deliberately with a public purpose, not having any promise of cure, but being persuaded that by submitting himself as an object of study he could fight the plague—which was invading his country, somewhere along the lower Niger. It seemed to me that many men had been made famous for a lesser heroism than this journey to face a lingering death, thousands of miles from home, in a strange climate, among people of an almost unknown type and wholly unknown ways : and in all my life, I have seen no sight so forlorn as were these two black faces in that spotlessly ordered ward—the young man's in its pathetic seriousness, the boy's in its dumb dismay, and both overcast with the creeping mist of this mortal lethargy.

The result of what I could gather from the publications

of the French Comité d'Afrique and elsewhere appeared in an article for Blackwood called *French and English in the Basin of the Niger*. Also, by following the French papers, I was able to predict closely the fate of Samory some days before the net finally closed in on him; and in this way I became known to the Colonial Office. The Under Secretary then in charge of West African affairs, gave me some information from time to time. French tradition, unlike the English, allowed and even encouraged officers to publish accounts of their services; with the result that public opinion in France was far more stirred than in England in support of the national activities. Presumably a desire to counteract this effect of British usage prompted the authorities when they commissioned me in 1899 to write accounts of what passed in the two chief scenes of conflict.

One of these concerned the happenings in Borgu, a territory on the right bank of the Niger, where the French sought to establish themselves at a point below the five hundred miles of unnavigable rapids which divide the long navigable stretch, on which Timbuctoo stands, from the navigable waterway with its entrance at Lagos. In Borgu Colonel Lugard had command, and my article was based on the information which he supplied to me. It told how the French attempt was defeated, and told also how easily the action of even one officer on either side might have made war difficult to avoid. I called the paper in Blackwood's *An Unwritten Chapter in History*; and I do not know that any book in English has handled the material contained either in it, or in the companion article—which had to be called *The Loss of Moshi*. Moshi was a rich region lying behind the Gold Coast territory and its king Bokary had made a treaty with the English and persisted in standing to his word. It cost him his kingdom; for when a hasty settlement was patched up at Paris in June, 1898, the French who had to give way in the Lower Niger got their way unreservedly in the Gold Coast hinterland. Major H. P. Northcott, the officer in command, marching up with Bokary

and the party to restore Great Britain's ally, had the painful duty of halting his forces just before they reached their objective, and of telling the black man that the white man's pledge could not be kept.

A few months later Major Northcott went to other service and I had seen enough of him to have a strong wish for his personal success : but he fell at the Modder River almost directly he joined his regiment. So died a gallant, honourable, most loveable Englishman.

About the other, now Sir Frederick Lugard, it has been on my conscience for many years that I owe him apology. When, he got command in Nigeria, after the Niger Company's rule was ended, I formed the conclusion that he was administering harshly and without regard for native traditions. My opinion was first shaken by intercourse with a young Irishman whom I knew as a member of the Gaelic League and who was certainly no fierce Imperialist. He had served in Nigeria and thought Sir Frederick Lugard a great administrator. It is, now, a matter of common agreement that nowhere in Africa has native tradition, the fabric of native rule, law and morality been better reconciled than in Nigeria with the overlordship of a European power. There has been peace with order and there is prosperity—which have flowed from the adoption of those principles in African government which were first and most effectively preached by Mary Kingsley.

This is a solemn way to begin talking about one whose whole being was a challenge to solemnity. Mary Kingsley's writings about West Africa had much of the quality that is in Mark Twain's studies of *Life on the Mississippi*. She made the British public take an interest in West African affairs by her humour; but when she had their attention trapped, suddenly she burst on them with all the seriousness of a Revivalist preacher. Of course, she did not make the public in general think long or seriously, but she made those who mattered think.

I am in a small difficulty about writing of her here



MARY H. KINGSLEY.

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which I may as well explain. Of all the books which I have published, the two by which I would most willingly be judged as a prose writer have been perhaps the least successful. One is a collection of essays called *For Second Reading* and I cannot blame its failure on the title. But for the other, I robbed a line which always pleased me in Yeats' *Shadowy Waters* :

I am as old as Time,
For I have all his garden wisdom.

Those who bought my *Garden Wisdom* for hints on the management of gardens were badly deceived : and perhaps the title prevented others from finding out that it contained my memories of some notable people—Walter Osborne, Stephen Phillips, my father, and, principally, Mary Kingsley. Principally, because I endeavoured there by the help of her old letters to set out what seemed to me most characteristic in her mind and work : and the result had the approbation of her kinsfolk. Since the book is still available, I cannot fairly embody a chapter of it ; and so I shall only say again what this friend of mine was like to meet.

Mary Kingsley was assuredly one of the most singular creatures that ever walked the earth—and “walked” is the proper word to use, though she always took ship or boat gladly for any destination. But although she had been a most adventurous traveller, her travel record was trifling, if you judge it by distance ; and from the nature of the country it was all done on foot. Probably she could ride but I have no record of her doing so at any time. I am not even sure that she had ever left her English home when, after her father's death, she set out for West Africa to study native ideas and practices in religion and law. It was to complete a great book which he had left unfinished ; and she chose deliberately a place where “all authorities agreed that Africans were at their wildest and worst.” What I know definitely is that in England she recoiled from a bicycle and confided in me once that she did

not really like the top of a bus. To one who did not know her record, this avoidance seemed completely in character. Her tall gaunt figure was always robed in black and to my mind suggested always the image of a severe housekeeper in some duke's establishment: the air of authority was there. Nobody could have guessed her age with assurance. She was in point of fact when I knew her between thirty-five and forty but might as well have been ten years older. Everything about her was demure, except her head-dress. I always took it to be a small black bonnet, but am informed that it was a fur cap: and this article had a way of getting pushed back which added a further suggestion that the part of the duke's housekeeper was being played by a rakish comedian—though played with great restraint so far as make-up and gesture went. It was her speech that betrayed her. Her voice was pleasant and refined but it was deep and strong: and it had at times a chuckle in it such as has seldom issued from a female throat; and her talk when she let herself go, matched the chuckle. It was full of gusto, loving to recount extravagances and humours: it was slangy and disorderly, scientific in substance but very loose in form: in short, she talked exactly as she wrote, and whoever does not know what that implies had better read her *Travels in West Africa*. She had a passion for richness of vocabulary. "My parrot and myself have picked up several new bad words which was unnecessary education for either of us," she wrote to me.—But grammar was trampled under her feet: the Macmillan firm had their work cut out to "loop in my straying prepositions," as she once put it. Only one thing of her speech did not reflect itself in print, and it was the final incongruity—so bizarre, that when I wrote of her before I shrank from setting it down—stupidly as I think now. She dropped h's profusely. What there should be in this trick of speech (which she shared with an eminent head of an Oxford College of my day) so indelicate that I felt delicacy about recording it I cannot say: nobody thought Lord Morris of Killanin vulgar

because he had the broadest brogue that ever rolled off a Connaught tongue. But there is no denying that the touch was unexpected. It came no doubt from her lifelong preference for people who could tell her facts about life at first hand; and these are mostly the less refined and she did not like refinement. Of all places I have known, Clifton was the most genteel, and she agreed with me. "Nothing would induce me to spend a night in it: nothing enables me to survive even an afternoon call on it but a carouse in the back slums of Bristol in company with a ship's carpenter and his wife who plays divinely on the hair comb."

Such were her letters and such was her conversation: but the full effect of it cannot be reproduced unless the black silk dress is visualized and the tall bony almost grim figure. Evelyn Sharp confirms my memory of one afternoon when, my wife's drawing-room being full of callers, a sudden lull in the conversation gave Mary Kingsley's voice to the whole assemblage. "The nearest I ever was to a gorilla was up in the Ogowé bush with some cannibal Fans." One of the other callers almost dropped her teacup in sheer dismay; but Mary Kingsley, being launched, did not notice that, and went on to tell me how this big male came towards her and her negroes, drumming on his chest and looking very ugly till, said she, "I asked the head man if it would not be better to shoot. 'Not yet,' he said, 'the other man's gun has no flint.'" And so they waited till the muzzle was up against the brute's chest and then pulled the trigger—and the flint lock did go off. After that, they had a great reception in the nearest village, for one of its men had nearly been killed by a gorilla. "Then," said Mary Kingsley, "my thirst for knowledge revived, and I asked 'How does a gorilla kill?'" She got no answer, but people seized her by the arms and dragged her away into the outskirts of the village, and only when they stopped and began to dig did she realize that she was to be given ocular demonstration. The gorilla had put its arms round the man from the front and torn out the shoulder blades.

At the end of this drawing-room conversation, I said, "That isn't in your book." "No," said she, "it would have spoilt my reputation as a credible traveller." A good many such like things I heard, which involved the telling of danger that she had confronted, and so were suppressed.

But all this concerns only one side of her nature—the side which riotously enjoyed all the adventure, "the spree" as she would call it. I said, in a review written before I knew her, that she was in love with "the bright eyes of danger," and she liked that phrase of Stevenson's. But the grave side of her, the side where her greatness lay, was in love with honour and justice. She had as many friends among missionaries as she had among traders—and very few have friends in these two camps: and she loved and admired many native Christians. But she had grave doubt as to whether it could be expected that the principles of Christianity would govern the dealings of even the best Europeans with the native races. What she did expect was that the white man would always respond to an appeal to his honour. The sense of honour seemed to her more potent and vital than the Christian ethics. And from the other side of the problem, many of the virtues preached by Christianity seemed to her capable of being misunderstood by the negroes. Only one was sure of comprehension. Justice spoke all languages.

No one who knew her even a little could be blind to the nobility and beauty of thought which lay behind the broad humour and accumulation of strange knowledge: but I am glad of one memory which has lasted more vividly than many more or less grotesque impressions of the dress in which she disguised herself. There was a big reception of literary people at the Mansion House and Mabel Dearmer was talking to me. "Who is that?" she asked pointing to a figure which indeed I had some difficulty in recognizing. "Mary Kingsley," said I. "But you said she was plain. She is the most beautiful person here." Only an artist would have said so: yet for that night some one—not herself, I am

sure—had sent her out looking like a Dürer Madonna. The head nobly poised on the long neck, the tall body and limbs noble and dignified in line and in movement, made a beauty, angular yet full of grace. The medallion of her head which is engraved on the title page of the African Society's Journal keeps some hint of that vision. Yet perhaps to eyes that could see, beauty was always visible in those large, grey, candid and friendly eyes and large, firm-set, humorous mouth, and the whole air of Quakerish simplicity so oddly blended with humorous controversial challenge. In 1924 an article of mine appeared in *Cornhill* about the Ashanti section at Wembley and the book in which Major Rattray (then in charge of the Ashantis who were brought over) had described this people. He had learnt not only their speech but their mysterious drum language, and from long familiarity had produced a book interpreting the native mind and native character and customs, which seemed to me to carry on the spirit of Mary Kingsley's work. I said so, and he wrote to me:

"Miss Kingsley was the greatest white woman who ever went to West Africa and proud I am to have had my efforts coupled with such a name. In some ways I think she was inspired. Her face (I only know it from an old photograph) in an old poke bonnet has always struck me as a beautiful face. I would willingly have given a few years of my life to have met her."

The last of her letters to me are not about West Africa. They have to do with issues raised by the Boer War—an event which considerably affected my literary career, because it altered my political outlook.

From undergraduate days I had been singularly incurious about politics. On the Irish question I had made up my mind for Home Rule and used for some years to take in Mr. William O'Brien's paper *United Ireland*. But after the Split and Parnell's death, I ceased to follow even Irish politics with any close study—although Vesey Knox my

school-fellow and Oxford contemporary had gone into Parliament as a Nationalist—winning one of the most important seats, Derry City. I saw him from time to time but never even went to the House of Commons: it seems a reproach to me that I never set eyes on Mr. Gladstone, much less heard him speak. By 1896, when I came to London, new tendencies had begun to develop in Irish affairs and I was much attracted by the positive good then being done by the Government. These material reforms had begun in the last period of Mr. Arthur Balfour's rule when the Congested District Board was set up. Long after, about 1911, the Eighty Club made a tour through Ireland and I helped to receive them in Galway. The Chairman of the Urban Council was there, my friend Martin McDonogh, physically I should say the biggest man in the West of Ireland, and certainly the ablest and most prosperous man of business. Shortly after the guests arrived he was accosted by a couple of blameless English Radicals who asked him which was the best of the Chief Secretaries he had known. "Arthur Balfour, of course," said Martin. "But surely you are a Home Ruler." "To be sure I am," said Martin with a shake of his huge shoulders, "But Arthur Balfour was the only one of the lot that ever did good to Connemara."

Horace Plunkett's propaganda too was beginning to make itself felt. He stood for the view that economic reforms were more urgently necessary than any political change and were more attainable: and he looked like getting things done. And he stood for finding ground on which the landlord class could co-operate with the mass of their fellow countrymen from whom they had been sharply divided by the Land Revolution: and that naturally pleased me. I was fully aware then, as I am now, that Scotland under a Union was a distinct nationality and a satisfied nationality, and if changes could be made so that the Union would mean to Ireland what it meant to Scotland, I was quite prepared to be a satisfied Nationalist within the Union. The grant of Local Government on the British

lines in 1897, announced by Mr. Arthur Balfour in a notable speech of pacification, seemed to me a long step in this direction—and I was even moved to write verse about it. We all know now that elements in the Tory Party were moving pretty far to an evolution by what came to be called devolution. They were already far involved in the process of transforming the ownership of Irish land from the landlord class to the tenant class, which meant as a rule transferring ownership from the Protestant descendants of settlers to the Catholic descendants of the original Gaelic people. But for the Boer War, I should almost certainly have been drawn into the group which in certain activities followed Horace Plunkett, and in certain others Lord Dunraven.

But the Boer War came and in the manner of its coming raised the whole question of the rights of nationalities. I had no prepossessions against the British Empire as such: the *Spectator* people got me to write them a sketch of the Diamond Jubilee procession; and I rejoiced quite frankly with those who were rejoicing, just as I enjoyed Mr. Kipling's stories without reserve. In those days I was even prepared to be convinced by Frenchmen of the "Superiority of the Anglo-Saxon" and wrote a review of the book in which M. Demolins sought to account for that, by him admitted, phenomenon. When I say that Strachey thought it "one of the best reviews ever written," I recall this without vanity, but simply as a proof that I could sometimes stroke a Briton the right way.

But I was not on that account prepared to admit that less superior peoples had no rights against this superiority: and in this I ran against the prevailing temper of that time. One of the articles which I wrote after the war had started (it did not get published—there were a good many of these) preserves a typical illustration from something that I had overheard in an hotel smoking-room. The disputant who held a brief against the war was getting the better of the argument, when the other brought down his hand with energy.

"I don't care about talk," he said; "what I want is to see all that pink on the map." He had learnt thinking imperially in the Cape to Cairo school. I never myself could see that this Cape to Cairo idea had much more than an alliteration to commend it. Sir George Taubman Goldie (who made the Niger Company) once damned it for me in a sentence: "Trade always seeks the ocean by the shortest route."

However, this is not the place to revive old discussions: my object is to recall the temper of that time, and I cannot illustrate it better than from the case of my father. He disapproved in advance the diplomatic and political passages which preceded the war: he thought that the English authorities and the Chartered Company were behaving unfairly to the Boers: he was very conscious of the "trail of finance" (Mr. Lecky's phrase) over it all: so much so that he said to me in the summer of 1899, "If it came to war one would feel almost bound to pray that we should be defeated." But, like nearly all Ulster Protestants, devotion in him to the British cause was too instinctive to be governed; and once war began, all these scruples disappeared. He would never have phrased it: "My country right or wrong": but when the test of war came he was among the honourable thousands who abdicated the function of judgment. Ireland he could judge and did judge, at all times, dispassionately, though not without inherited prepossessions. With me it was different. The Boer war taught me definitely that I was an Irishman first; and being an Irishman in my sense meant having an outlook other than the Englishman's. I felt no difficulty about desiring that the Boers should succeed in retaining their independence; but it never appeared to me that this would mean an end to Britain.

I had much correspondence about it all with Mary Kingsley:

"If other people would not abuse the Anglo-Saxon so much," she wrote to me, "probably we could do the abusing

ourselves : but it is a dire mess as it stands. Good old Lecky, in spite of his copy-book style has lots of solid truth in him. But the Anglo-Saxon requires some greater prophet to physic him now he is suffering from too much beans. Mrs. Green's set have no chance with him. They lash him, and he kicks instead of listening. I can't do anything. I am vulgar, so the A.S. understands me, but the superior soul shrinks from me and laughs at Lecky's 'copybook.' "

That was Mary Kingsley jesting. This is the other side of her :

" I love my own country. I have seen for years it must go smash if it sticks to the creed it had, say this day six months back, but do anything to save the crash, I felt I could not. One half the people would shrink back in horror from the things I would do, the other half say, ' That's too fine a feeling of honour for practical politics.' If our rule were what it might be but is not—if it were Liberty, Justice, Representation—we should have the right, the divine right, to enforce it, but so long as it is not, we have not : we are taking unto ourselves the right of God when we are an idol."

Finally I shall quote from a letter which she wrote to the *Spectator* before she sailed to Cape Town and did not return :

" Emotionalism is sitting at our Council-board in a place that should be occupied by knowledge. That emotionalism . . . is windy headed brag and self satisfied ignorance. It is the nearest thing an Englishman ever has to hysterics. Learn things as they are and keep your given word—let it cost what it may, be just. Mercy and generosity are only compromises made towards the attainment of justice, that perfect thing by which alone an Empire can prosper, and which is attainable by honourable-minded Englishmen by knowledge of the facts of the case."

My own reasoned point of view was put in a letter to the *Spectator* just before the actual break came ; and I urged then arbitration with President McKinley as arbitrator. But the English have always been great advocates of arbi-

tration, for other people; and the editors of the *Spectator*, admirably characteristic of their race, were much too sure of England's right and England's duty to enforce that right to lend any support to the proposal.

Looking back on it now, I think that England took the first months, with their stunning reverses, less badly than any other European people would have done: for in such a case, where the chief feeling is of hurt pride, the great nation does not get the steadying sense of real danger. Fifteen years later I was to admire England's courage with all my heart: in 1900 it was an effort to separate admiration from dislike, and my Irish blood found queer cross-currents in it. Irish soldiers were again earning glory; yet the tons of shamrock sold on St. Patrick's Day in London in 1900 provoked more than they pleased me. I had no personal link with the war: my brother was then away in the Soudan, delimiting the Abyssinian frontier. On the whole, for the first part of the war, the British troops carried my sympathy with them; but I could not be reckoned among its full-blooded supporters. In turning over the old volumes of the *Spectator* a review of my book of miscellaneous essays met me, which concluded with this sentence. "The reader will lay it down with the slightly ruffled sense of having been a good deal contradicted." Strachey, for I am sure that he was the writer, must probably have expressed his attitude of mind towards me in general during that period; for I am sure that I was controversial in private. But I held my peace in public until it had been announced that the war was over or as good as over; and then it was in another paper that I broke out. The *Saturday Review*, for which I was also doing a good many articles (about Ireland, Africa and literature in general) published a poem by Mr. Swinburne in honour of Colonel Benson, who was killed in action against a force commanded by General Louis Botha. The editorial notes observed justly that the Boers in 1901 were showing great courage. Apparently, Mr. Swinburne did not take this view; and he was very much

offended by the protests which had been raised by the policy of concentration camps, in which Boer women and children died terribly fast. And so he passed from praise of the dead Colonel to this exhortation :

“ Nor heed we more than he what liars say
Of mercy's holiest duties left undone
Towards whelps and dams of murderous foes whom none
Save we had spared or feared to starve or slay.”

On this, I went for Mr. Swinburne, and subsequently other people went for me. The controversy shifted on to Boer methods of warfare, and, now that I have been a soldier I am glad to find nothing in those letters from which, in my judgment, a soldier ought to dissent. It was urged, for instance that the Boers outraged the dead because they stripped the bodies. This happened in the last stages of a war where the only method of renewing their stores was by capture : and it should not have been necessary for anyone to point out that clothes and boots also are ammunition.

Apparently, the beginnings of this controversy caused me to take stock of my position. I saw no objection to writing literary essays and reviews for either the *Spectator* or the *Saturday* : that did not commit me in regard to their politics. But I was a shareholder in the *Spectator* and as such profited by the fact that it was advocating popular views ; and I decided accordingly to relinquish my shares. Strachey was very friendly about it and said that he “ would have done just the same had he been a holder of shares, however small, in the *Daily News*.”

There was nothing very serious in that, as my personal ties with the *Spectator* were in no sense broken ; indeed they ceased to be jeopardized, for I no longer felt called upon to remonstrate privately. Nobody can continually bear to be informed that he is stating untruths believing them to be true, which is what Plato called the “ lie in the soul ” ; and that had been the gist of my criticism to Strachey. The more I look back, the more I wonder at his forbearance.

But necessarily I was precluded from writing articles which might commit the paper to some unwelcome view; and when an issue is so paramount as was the war, references to it slip into all sorts of places. Besides I was also at loggerheads with Strachey about Ireland. As a consequence, after 1900 I was doing nothing but book reviewing for the *Spectator* and less and less of that. During 1901 I was writing a good deal more for the *Saturday* than for its rival, and it delighted me to have one or two chances of deputizing for "Max" as dramatic critic. About Irish matters the paper was very much in sympathy with Horace Plunkett and with Mr. Wyndham, so that I had no friction over this.

But unfortunately, though politics did not part us, a literary quarrel did. The *Saturday* attacked, in a way that I thought unfair, the man for whose work I had most admiration and for whose company I had most liking. And here I must go back a long way.

At the end of 1894 W. L. Courtney became editor of the *Fortnightly*. I had only known him by sight at Oxford (generally rowing in a veterans' eight) but he examined me for one of my schools, and on the strength of this, I asked him to let me write about Stevenson. The article appeared in December, 1894—I think the first of his editing. It was a pleasure to be in the *Fortnightly*, but much more to think that the expression of my literary allegiance would at last reach R.L.S. Ten days after came the news of Stevenson's death. Some time later, before I came to settle in London, I wrote to Sidney Colvin, speaking of my regret; and this led to my going for the first time to see him in his house at the British Museum. This admirable critic and scholar, whose book on Keats ranks with the best expository criticism of our time, had a lifelong passion for interesting himself in the work of younger literary men; and it was one of the bonds between him and the lady who afterwards became his wife, and who even in those days always took part in his many hospitalities. Colvin and Mrs. Sitwell were very friendly about my writing; indeed when my first book of

poems was published Colvin paid me the high compliment of saying that my verse reminded him of R.L.S.—which has I hope some justification. But neither they nor I attached much importance to my work in the scheme of things, except as the means by which a family should be supported, and also as an instrument for helping honestly the work of others.

I think Colvin rated my critical opinion nearly as high as I do myself: though perhaps he may not have discriminated as I do between my appraisal of verse and prose. Certain novelists in particular I may have overpraised, because something in their personal make-up enabled them to give me excessive pleasure. I am not sure that Dumas père is so great a writer as I think him; though I am absolutely certain that the French nation as a whole ungratefully disparage his genius, and should correct their estimate by what is thought of him outside French boundaries, just as we ought to do in the case of Byron. It is probable again that I may have rated Marion Crawford too high, and I thought so the more after I met him, once only at a Macmillan dinner, and found how instinctively we got on together. I had long been reading with delight a friend's work, though I never knew it. Still, I shall be hard to persuade that *The Cigarette Maker's Romance* is not one of the best pieces of imaginative work in modern prose. Again, in quite a different kind, I may have been wrong in putting Lucas Malet's *Sir Richard Calmady* so high as I did: and if so, the fault lay in a pliability of mind which has forced me in serious criticism always to see work from the author's standpoint, to be interpreter rather than judge.

But when verse is in question, nothing is going to shake my confidence in my own judgment. You might as well argue with a tea-taster. He knows what good tea is, and pronounces. Possibly he, too, may accept limitations; an expert in wine may know that certain wines or vintages are unsympathetic to his palate. There is work in verse

about which I only say that it does not move me as does what I recognize for the best. Mr. Bridges is an outstanding example ; so to a lesser extent, is Laurence Binyon, though Binyon has written passages which I not merely approve but feel ; which have gone into my mind and still haunt it with beauty : to remember them is to evoke always the same thrill. All critics have their limitations, and what matters in a good critic's work is the positive side—what he sees, not what he is blind to. It would never have disturbed me to find that Andrew Lang or Professor Saintsbury was indifferent to work that I liked : though, if either of them had called that bad which I thought good, I should have felt obliged to decide seriously for myself which of us ought to be beaten. But if either of them told me that a book was a good book, I could count on finding that I also enjoyed it.

Nowadays, more than thirty years since I took up the trade of criticism, Philip drunk can appeal to Philip sober ; and so far as the appraisal of verse goes, whether it was written in Queen Victoria's reign or Queen Elizabeth's, I do not find my earlier judgments reversed. I may select more definitely within the mass of a man's work ; but what I liked thirty years ago, I like now ; what I called great work thirty years ago—and I never used that appraisal lightly—does not seem to me lessened. And I stand absolutely and securely by my early estimate of the man whose career from 1896 to about 1904 was the chief interest for Sidney Colvin—and hardly less than that for me.

The story of Stephen Phillips has often been told, and it is one of a reverse, none the less tragic because it had its sordid aspect. I have told it myself from one stand-point in "Garden Wisdom" : but here I present it as an episode in the history of criticism.

The first I heard of his name was in the close of 1896, when Lawrence Binyon, his cousin, published his first little volume of verse. This was dedicated "To Stephen and May" which happened to be the names of my wife and

myself, and so roused my curiosity. But I soon heard of Phillips at the *Spectator*, where several of his poems were appearing at the time; and among those were one or two on which his reputation will rest. Where we met first, I am not sure, but I remember him best in relation to the *Spectator*, where old Mr. Hutton was passionately interested over this new man. He had probably seen, what I did not then know, the two idylls *Marpessa* and *Christ in Hades*—both of them derivative poetry, the remaking of ancient themes: *Marpessa* being even deliberately a counterpart to Tennyson's *Enone*, and the other showing at every turn the influence of Milton. But the work by which I first knew Phillips sought material for tragic poetry in the gin-shop and the street-walker, and found it more successfully where there was the less obvious appeal. *The Wife* has great poetry in it though it reeks of melodrama: but the *Woman with the Dead Soul* is great poetry throughout, and in every sense original.

I was then at times helping with the business of getting the paper ready for press, and so came to know how much Mr. Hutton had insisted on alterations and how justly; for Phillips working on these modern lines was often obscure. I learnt also (chiefly from Phillips himself) how anxious the editors of the *Spectator* were to supplement a poet's earnings—and how amazingly incompetent the poet was to turn his hand to prose.

That surprised me the more when I came to know him; for nobody that I have known talked better on the technique of verse. Milton was to him the unapproachable artist, the model of models; and I have heard Phillips condemn Tennyson fiercely for overdoing the very things which he himself came to exaggerate—alliteration and suggestion of physical sounds. In regard to prose, he was a man of one author—Dickens. That preference expressed him. He liked things full bodied, especially humour; and he liked eating and drinking (especially drinking); he liked the traditional English games; though his interest in a cricket match

was quite other than that of Dickens, he liked the match in *Pickwick*. Above all, he liked low company, odd types, "character parts"; and he had a morose distaste for polite society. It is comic to reflect, since the charge against him was that his reputation had been made by log-rolling in drawing-rooms, how all but impossible it was to get him anywhere where people wore evening dress; and as for being lionized, no beast of the forest was ever more elusive, or more moody and miserable when produced for inspection.

He had been an actor in the Benson Company, and had married a member of it. They both had the actor's characteristic of being unable to stay indoors of an evening; but that was the only mark of the profession I ever saw in Phillips. He had enjoyed the life, the gipsy life of a strolling company; but I never saw the least sign that he had cared whether he acted well or badly. What he had enjoyed and pursued after was a reputation for practical jokes—carried out with the extraordinary solemnity of which his face was capable. These things he used to recount with gusto, and dwelt on the delicious moments when, as the ghost of *Hamlet*, he found that the revolving machine which should have pivoted him without motion off the stage had stuck, and that Benson was interpolating quite other adjurations than those which the audience heard (or were meant to hear). Nevertheless I did not attach enough importance to this experience of his, when he asked me one day if I would collaborate in a play. I only answered that I did not know which of us was the less fitted for the job.

In the last weeks of 1897 his *Poems* came out—just in time to be eligible for a prize which *The Academy* that month offered—£100 to the best book of poems published in the year. The offer was the first instance of what has since become a common way of advertising a journal, and so it attracted attention; but it was sheer chance that there coincided with it the publication of this wholly exceptional book. The judges' award only endorsed the approbation already given by the most accepted critics; I remember

especially a phrase of old Frederick Greenwood's who said in *Blackwood* that passages in *Marpessa* "move with the sure footfall of the immortals."

But Lane, the publisher, certainly lacked reticence, and it was asking for attack to bring out an edition decorated with the laurel crown. No doubt Maurice Hewlett, for example, would have eaten a publisher alive who did such a thing without consulting him—or even who proposed it. But Phillips in these matters said nothing. He attached no more importance to what people would think seemly or unseemly than if he had been Verlaine or Villon. If the truth may be told, he had too often outraged the decencies to trouble about the conventions. The matter with him was not that he was a drawing-room petted charlatan, but that he was a great poet who let himself fall into sheer debauchery between the times when inspiration came to him. Nobody can say so well as he what is in *The Poet's Prayer*—the latest piece of first-rate work that he wrote and perhaps the surest of all to last. Recall only a few lines, not continuous, but indicating the thought.

"That I have felt the rushing wind of Thee :
That I have run before Thy blast to sea,
Beautiful Power, I praise Thee : yet I send
A prayer that sudden strength be not the end

Not then when I am boundless, without bars,
When I am rapt in hurry to the stars
Not then I need Thee : for delight is wise ;
I err not in the freedom of the skies.
But when thy Joy is past : comes in the test,
To front the life that lingers after zest. . . .
'Tis not in flesh so swiftly to descend,
And sudden from the spheres with earth to blend
And I, from splendour thrown, and dashed from dream,
Into the flare pursue the former gleam."

That poem was written certainly after 1904, when I left London, for I never saw it in manuscript : and such thoughts did not belong to the years when I first knew him : for he

was then full of the afflatus. Less than a year after the *Poems* appeared, Sidney Colvin asked Mrs. Sitwell, my wife and me to his house, where Phillips read us his *Paolo and Francesca*.

He was then thirty-four; a big, powerful young man rather heavily built, with a certain heaviness also about the handsome lines of his face: shyness in him was almost sulky, but when he grew animated, the heavy mask lit up from within: and he had one special charm, his voice, which went with the most perfect gift for reading aloud I have ever known. He began to read to us, and I expected to hear verse that would seem to me beautiful: but of what happened I had not the faintest anticipation. The thing, coming at one like that, out of the blue, took hold of us in a way that bewildered me. I have never been so moved in my life, so excited by a novel beauty: and my wife, by no means an uncritical person, was just as much under the spell.

Next day I took a step which, had it succeeded, might have helped matters. Being in some minor measure literary adviser to the Macmillans, I went to them and advised them to get hold of this work. They authorized me to offer £100 down in advance of royalties—about the usual terms for a novelist who has not succeeded. Phillips accepted gladly: but then I had a letter to say that Lane had rushed down, entreated and insisted and offered to outbid anything that the older firm would propose. The Macmillans withdrew in high dudgeon and Lane continued to manage Phillips' work in England: though for America Mr. Brett of the Macmillan Company came over and bought the American rights later at a high figure—opening his discourse by saying to Phillips that he knew the same or better terms could be had in a dozen places. If Mr. Brett and I had come together in 1898, it would, I think, have been a good day for Stephen Phillips.

But when this abortive deal was going on, nobody guessed that the play would be accepted for production on



Elliott & Fry.

STEPHEN PHILLIPS.

the stage. People nowadays do not realize the attitude towards theatrical work assumed by the ordinary man about town at that time and reflected by the theatrical manager. Unless indeed, one should rather put it that the man about town thought what the theatrical manager encouraged him to think. For the man about town, always anxious to seem well informed, can be relied to say about a play what some person connected with the theatre has said to him.

At all events, at the close of last century men about town and men of the world alike were convinced that literary merit was detrimental on the stage. Shakespeare was outside the rules ; Wilde succeeded, although he was admittedly something of a writer, because he was a wit and almost a man about town. J. M. Barrie was the exception, and this sort of reasoner is always better content with his rule if he can find an exception to it. Everybody who read at all read Shaw, but attending his plays, when the Stage Society produced them, was held to manifest a diseased curiosity or an affectation—just as if they were Ibsen's.

But the idea that a poet, although he had succeeded as a poet, should have his play produced appeared unthinkable ; and Mr. George Alexander seemed the last man to defy augury. It was an extraordinary piece of news that he had accepted it : and there was much throwing up of hats.

However, from acceptance to production was a long way ; and Phillips got very uneasy. At this time he lived down at Ashford in Middlesex, near his wife's people, in a very small house. I went down there often and he used to play cricket with some local club on terrifying pitches. Phillips was too fine a player for that sort of thing : but the humour of anything amused him and this was highly unconventional cricket. Once, however, we had got on to a decent ground and had a man in against us who could play and looked like making runs. Phillips was bowling—his special accomplishment—and I was at short leg, when he pitched a ball right at the batsman's shoulder. It was almost a practical joke and it succeeded, for the batsman

taken by surprise hit confusedly at the toss, half missed it and sent up the easiest kind of catch to square leg. I missed that catch and the batsman went on and got a hundred. Phillips never again mentioned the matter: it was too grave.

The next year he was playing with one of the many strong clubs that are about London and I saw him play a fine innings one day I went down. *Paolo and Francesca* had been published as a book and the praises were redoubled. No one was more enthusiastic than Churton Collins in the *Saturday Review*. Then came a piece of downright lamentable bad luck. Phillips was now fully in his stride, well and strong: the birth of his son gave him pleasure (though this child never assumed in his life anything of the place held by a daughter he lost before I knew him); and the cricket was very good for him in all ways. But he slipped one night getting out of a train, broke his leg and it set badly: thenceforward he limped always, and that was the end of cricket.

Yet the very best of his work was done in that little house at Ashford. One day when I had gone down he read what he had been working on—the last act of *Herod*. It was written before the others, and evidently in one jet, prolonged over days. On the strength of it, Tree accepted the play for “His Majesty’s”; and so within less than five years after he came penniless to London, with few friends and without one influential acquaintance, this young man had got two plays in verse accepted at the two leading theatres. It was fantastic.

Once again, bad luck came across him. With this new prosperity, he and his wife determined to move into more comfortable quarters and they found what they wanted at Egham—a modest, most ordinary, little red brick villa standing in a street of detached houses, but all as like one another as peas in a pod. Just as they moved in, Tree was going to Homburg and insisted that Phillips should accompany him to continue work on *Herod*: for the first two acts

were being written in consultation with this very clever actor-manager. Phillips came back after ten days and was met at the station by his wife, who told him that ghosts had driven out the family. Nobody had seen anything, except apparently the baby—who had shown all signs of fright and sometimes of strangulation: but everybody had heard things, and the servants had bolted. Since then, they had learnt that the house was reputed haunted. At all events nothing would induce Mrs. Phillips to go near it again: and they paid rent for a term of years while it stood empty.

Herod was the first of the plays to be produced. Max Beerbohm in the *Saturday* gave it two articles, which opened with the avowal that he had not read *Paolo and Francesca* and was rather prejudiced by the laudation of it. After this, he went on to praise *Herod* vehemently, both as poetry and as "dramaturgy." These articles, however, were followed by an unsigned review of the text—unfriendly, but by a very capable critic, who fastened on the many weaknesses and staginess of the two first acts—those written in consultation with Tree. In so far as a critic's business is to discover faults, the work could not have been better done; and the greater merit of the last act was recognized.

In this there was nothing to complain of, yet Phillips foolishly allowed himself to complain, through the medium of a "Conversation" with William Archer. For this Max hit him hard in the *Saturday*: it was a friend's rebuke. I added what counsel I could, and thought it a good sign that his spleen should pour itself into a "Limerick" which he recited to me:

"In Fleet Street there flourished a cad
Who desired, who aspired, to be mad,
Plump, prurient, pink,
Without courage to drink
And too dreamy a beast to be bad."

Tennyson relieved himself once at least in the same way: and up to this time, though I saw that Phillips was unduly

thin-skinned, I did not feel that any harm was done. What I saw was the demoralizing effect of productions which tantalized by the hope of a great money reward. *Herod* and *Paolo* both ran long enough to bring in a very considerable sum to the author, yet not enough to make it clear that the poetic drama might pay: and unless he succeeded in this Phillips had failed—but not because of the money.

His mastering desire was to make poetry popular as novels were popular; to do what Byron had done: and to his mind, this could only be accomplished through the stage. He held that modern poetic literature, with its excessive concentration on the lyric, condemned poetry to an unduly limited audience. It had become individual: it ought to become communal, speaking to a crowd, not to the lonely reader; and for this, he thought that Byron's qualities, the rush and sweep of turbulent emotion, were necessary. Of the nineteenth century poets he rated Byron highest—oddly though this squares with his allegiance to Milton.

I see now that he resembled Byron in at least one thing: a lack of the gift for writing plays. He had been to school, as Byron never was, in the theatre: he had learnt the principles of stage construction; but the quality which gives life to a scene was never there. At the time I blamed on various circumstances the fact—of which I was conscious—that the plays, produced with every elaboration of artifice, moved me less when performed than when I read them. I know now that the fault was in the dramatist; and I think that he might have written a poem on Herod better than was the play—using dialogue as it is used in the Epic or the Idyll. But one could not in reason expect the man himself to see this, or to turn back from so great a purpose, and so glittering a reward.

His next adventure brought him nearer to full success than he had ever come, or ever came again. *Ulysses* is a wonderfully skilful piece of stage craftsmanship, and what was deficient in his dramatic quality mattered less here, since it was really not a drama but a pageant or masque.

While he was busy on it, it held him and pleased him : " *Ulysses* is the top of my work so far, I think," he wrote to me : and the reception, heaven knows, was flattering enough and the reward rich. But this time there were signs of a definitely hostile campaign, in which jealousy counted for something. In the middle of it, Lane most injudiciously issued to the world what was a very flagrant puff—a pamphlet sketch of Phillips's life with selections from the reviews. The *Saturday* had published a review of the book, scathing, yet quite within the bounds of fair expression of a temperamental dislike. Now, the editor himself leapt out with a bludgeon, and accused the author of " ceaseless industry in pushing himself," and his admirers of " inducing critics with social ambitions in view " to write him up. (Old Hutton, for instance: I seem to see it being attempted !)

All this was absurd enough when one remembered that *Paolo and Francesca* had been praised as vehemently in the *Saturday* as anywhere else : but still more because in the summer after its appearance Phillips was invited to reply for the toast of Literature at the Academy banquet, and refused. Sidney Colvin was furious with him, and rightly ; no artist can with propriety put aside such an honour offered by artists : but the poet's *mauvaise honte* could not be got over. It would have been poorly justified by a total disregard of all publicity, but it had not that justification. One thing however it did prove—a complete absence of all faculty for organizing advertisement. The truth was that those who pushed the campaign to make the work of Stephen Phillips known were such men as Sidney Colvin, the editors of the *Spectator*, William Archer (specially concerned for getting literature a fair hearing on the stage) and old Mr. James Knowles of the *Nineteenth Century*. These people were interested in his career because they regarded his poetry as the best that had been produced since Tennyson's day. I helped them because I thought as they did, and have not changed my opinion : and I severed my connection with the *Saturday* under that editorship, because I regarded

the article as an insult to me personally, as well as to a score of better men.

There was nothing to worry about in the material effect of these attacks, and I implored Phillips to take to heart Swift's saying: "No man was ever written down but by himself." Yet it was plain that his fibre was affected: and far too much of his time was spent hanging about the theatre, watching the ebb and flow of returns—with excursions to the nearest bar. The thing to lift him out of this vicious torpor was new work; and he did not settle to it, for a reason that is worth emphasizing. He could not find a subject suited to his needs—but that was because of the arbitrary rules of the British stage.

His idea of the poetic drama was governed by that of the Greek stage: it should be the telling in dramatic form of a story, already familiar in its outlines to the audience and already charged with associations. *Paolo and Francesca* had been, to some extent, thus familiar in outline: *Ulysses* had been familiar; but in neither case was there, except for a limited few, any responsive groundwork of associations. In *Herod* it was otherwise. There, but especially in the final Act, he touched the fringes of what is the central mythology in the consciousness of every Christian; he used names that came to the ear trailing memories along with them.

What he wanted most to write—as many others have wanted—was to write a drama of Christ's life: yet this he put aside, not from diffidence, but from a sense that he must inevitably estrange and shock. The story to which he turned was not in the New Testament but in the heritage that came to Christianity from Judea: the story of all stories in the Old Testament which had closest connection with Christ's life, yet which admitted in a saint most of human frailty. If Stephen Phillips had written a play of David's sin and David's repentance, interwoven with the mystical significance of Christ's descent from the fruit of that repented sinning, he would assuredly have written a greater work than he

has left us. But the censor would have forbidden its production on the stage.

So he decided to write the story as it were by implication, with a Cromwellian soldier for his David: disnaturating the myth, stripping it of all that clung to it, and indeed of all that makes sympathy for the chief character possible; denying himself all those colours, all those echoes of memory, which he had used so superbly in that part of *Herod* which sprang spontaneously from him. And for this treason to his art he paid in full.

The *Sin of David* as an acting play for a long time failed to find a producer: as a book, when it was published, it marked the first definite falling off in his work; and the discouragement to which he was weakly prone grew and grew; and from that time forward he steadily "wrote himself down."

Only one thing lives out of those years: that tragic apology for himself which I have quoted already. He might well cry to the power that inspired, but between whiles left him unbreathed on—

"Sustain me in that hour with Thy left hand
And aid me when I cease to soar, to stand;
Make me Thy athlete even in my bed,
Thy girded runner though the course be sped:

Else shall Thy dreadful gift still people Hell
And men not measure from what height I fell."

For that fall, and that ruin, no one but he need take credit or discredit. His own doing and undoing made him live to become a parodist of himself. But can this alter the work of those days while inspiration came to him, while he was the "girded athlete"? I have read over many times at long intervals the poems by which he should be judged, and they say as much to me as ever they said: I have read the last act of *Herod* to people who had either not known or had forgotten it, and have seen it move them as it moved me: and I know that the judgment of a quarter of a century

ago was right. Some day people will begin to enquire why the critics of my generation let themselves be frightened away from their own verdict—even when the man whom they had praised furnished a whole armoury of missiles to fling at those who praised him.

All these echoes of controversy, and far more harassing regrets, rise up to separate me from early memories of this friend of mine: I have to shove them aside like a screen to get back to the good days when jokes were plenty. One comes to me. Phillips could always find some odd companion, and at Ashford had foregathered with an ex-member of the Scotland Yard force; and he told me with the solemnity that always masked his special enjoyment how this worthy had come and proposed to provide him with material for a play. "It would not be my first collaboration, sir," he had said. "Me and Mr. Nat Gould has done a good deal together."

The police there had a cricket eleven and on one occasion Phillips was brought along with them to assist. They were beguiling a railway journey with cards, and Phillips suggested that they were perhaps infringing the Gambling Act. They did not dispute this, but, said one, "On an occasion like this, Sir, we are, in a manner of speaking, above the law." Dickens might have invented that saying.

The chance to play policeman in good earnest once came to Phillips. He was in a lodging at Brighton and sat late reading in his sitting-room when the door opened and a man entered in canvas shoes. The two looked at each other and the intruder was asked what he wanted. "I'm a burglar," was his simple answer. Phillips found the simplicity disarming. He suggested that an overcoat—the only spoil collected—should be put down, and when this was done, he saw the stranger—meekly preceding him—to the door, and ushered him into the street. But, like a fool, he told the story, which got into print and he was much laughed at. Yet what, after all, would any other poet have done? Tennyson? Browning? Excellent citizens, no doubt, but

I do not see them handing over so incompetent a malefactor to the law. And certainly Phillips had very little of the good citizen about him.

His relations with Beerbohm Tree, the actor-manager, who did most for him, were a continual source of amusement. There was something puckish in both of them. When *Ulysses* was in preparation, Tree summoned one of his designers and asked him—Phillips standing by—how he proposed to represent Styx. "A livid river, Mr.—: how will you give us a livid river?" "Puckered linen, Sir Herbert." "Mr. — I beg of you to be more careful in the language you employ. You speak in the presence of a poet who has undertaken to conjure up the mysteries of the underworld; and you talk of 'puckered linen.' Mr. — I order you to have veneration for the sensibilities of an artist." "But, Sir Herbert," said the designer who was in the tale as Phillips told it, German, "I give you my word I do not see what else there is able to be used but puckered linen." "Mr. — I command you not to employ again these abhorrent words."

Jesting apart, Tree threw all his ingenuity and all the resource of his theatre into that production, and into the performance, of which he carried the whole weight, being "on" in almost every moment of every scene. His temperament, however, was unlike Lady Bancroft's and as the run prolonged itself, his interest flagged, and the author, who was far too often a spectator, fretted at the actor's listlessness, till one day Tree began to pour out complaint of the multitude of his occupations and distractions: so many letters to write, engagements to keep, people to interview. "Ah," said Phillips, seeing his chance at last, "but think of the rest you have while you are on the stage." Tree was far too real a wit himself not to enjoy that thrust.

Looking back now on those days, I am devoutly thankful that none of my own ventures ever made me dependent on that way of life. Of course I wrote plays: an unacted play is the skeleton in every writer's cupboard; but Yeats

turned down the last of them so decisively—and with such justice—that I gave up for ever the idea of seeing my creations on the boards, even without hope of remuneration, as was the lot of those who wrote for the Abbey Theatre, twenty-five years ago. As for the regular business, with its huge gamble, the worst is, from a writer's point of view, that the dramatist must adapt himself more or less to the tribal customs of those strange people, actors and actresses. Perhaps they are neither so strange or so tribal, now that every second young woman of good family and appearance is aspiring at least to "walk on"; and perhaps being less tribal, they are less good at their queer profession than when they remained by choice and instinct a people aloof and apart. Nothing that I remember is more poignant than a vision of those years, seen at the "Old Ship" in Brighton.

There in the smoking-room was J. L. Toole, one of the best actors I ever saw—and perhaps the most profoundly English—as English as the work of Charles Dickens. There he was, or what was left of him, paralysed and speechless, in a bath-chair. His tribe was about him, all his kindred, literal or metaphorical; they had just come in from taking him to see some show on the pier. No doubt they themselves could not have stayed indoors comfortably for an evening: but he was the centre of their existence and they must minister to his need which was, evening after evening, to be taken somewhere where the footlights blazed up, and something was spoken, something acted, on some kind of a stage. On Sundays, in default of all else—for this was before picture houses—they took him to a service.

Kindly, affectionately, and respectfully they waited on him: they were a united family, and I fancy they managed to keep up some sort of communication. But what passed in that muted organism, what thoughts, what feelings—if any thought or feeling—in that stricken brain, behind those features whose play once had such mastery of laughter, I do not believe they could have dimly guessed. All that one recognized, was their profound tribal indifference to the

usages of that larger tribe or horde, which would have hidden a man so afflicted. For them, it was in no way repellent that he should be, as he was then, one of the sights of Brighton ; and possibly it was at the back of their minds that, just as his eyes craved nightly to rest on some familiar display, so it was not against his instincts, and perhaps answered some obscure need, that he also should nightly be seen and draw eyes where he was playing in public his last part. People were let in for money to see Swift pacing his room, a grey brooding lunatic ; that was unkindly done, the great writer had no tribe of his own fellowship. Here, there was no hint of unkindness ; nobody about that bath-chair but seemed proud to be in attendance. Yet I could no more understand the instinct or the indifference which made them accept this publicity than the need which drew them all out night after night to feel some reflection of the stage's glare.

CHAPTER VIII

IRELAND IN LONDON

THE general scatterment of my connections with journalism which resulted from the Boer War altered a good deal the nature of my work. I still wrote much for periodicals, but nobody can live by contributions to magazines; so the publisher bulked bigger in my life than the editor.

The first commission for a book that I ever got was one of the pleasantest and it came from the Macmillans. It was to do Donegal and Antrim for the Highways and Byways series which had only just been begun by Mr. Norway's Devon and Cornwall. But for my volume Hugh Thomson was to do the whole illustration, landscape as well as figure subjects. Nobody will suggest that his landscape studies are comparable to Joseph Pennell's, who supplied these for several of the other volumes; but I was more than content with my illustrator. I had never known that the delightful draughtsman who had such feeling for eighteenth century England—for Steele and Addison and Pope, for Sir Roger de Coverley and the *Rape of the Lock*, and for Austin Dobson's eighteenth century vignettes—was a little Irishman with Belfast strong on his tongue, but having the cock of the eye that one would associate with a humorous jarvey on a Dublin sidecar. (Though for that matter the Belfast jarvey also is well capable of cocking his eye.) I met Hugh at once, of course, and we arranged a procedure—which was, unfortunately, to proceed separately. It worked

out to a somewhat patchy method of illustration, for I concentrated on the places where there was fishing and he on those where there was golf: all I could do for him was to provide a route and introductions. But he was enchanted with himself. Ireland outside the north-east corner was all new to him—in some ways new as it might be to an Englishman: and he loved the change to landscape. "I am a little disappointed with my work in the way of character," he wrote. "The scenery occupies all my thoughts and I hate to sit down and sketch one delightful bit for fear I shall presently come across something ever so much more taking for which I shall not have the time. I am not an experienced cool-headed special artist."

Yet for his character work he found many models that delighted him. To one I directed him, and he has preserved the image of Turlough McSwiney, the old piper of Gweedore. There was never anywhere a more distinguished looking human being. Music, I suppose, was traditional in his family: but the McSwineys had been for centuries a clan of "galloglasses," professional fighting men, and the head of them was marshal of the O'Donnells. Like all Gaelic sword-bearing nobles, under the penal laws they had been driven down into the peasantry: yet here and there a man among them was conscious of his past. Turlough McSwiney was fully acquainted with much in Irish annals that was not then—nor is now—generally known and I said to him "You take a great interest in Irish history." "No," said he, "I never took much interest except so far as it concerns my family and myself!"

He had, like all these Gaelic speaking Donegal peasants, been over the seas to England, time and again, for harvest work: but he had also been to America, to play at some Gaelic musical festivals. The man was a born artist, and he had by nature the long delicate fingers of a musician. I said so; but he held them up, all deformed with spade labour, "Music," he said contemptuously, "there is no music in these hands."

There are many good sketches of old women in Donegal *Highways*. But for his models of pretty girls Hugh had only one. Mrs. Hugh with her black hair and bright colour was the traditional Irish colleen, and in these pictures of his you may see her, barelegged and shawled, time and again, or driving an ass-cart, or sitting before a creel on pony-back ; but it is always Mrs. Hugh. These two good kindly Irish folk adored each other and adored their one child, a boy ; and now they are all gone, *mó thruagh*.

As for me, I loved the return to what was familiar and I began for the first time to acquaint myself seriously with the historic background. To-day, my re-weaving of the story of the various O'Donnells, O'Neills, and MacDonnells seems to me shockingly loose in texture ; but the enjoyment communicates itself. Mary Kingsley wrote to me that it was "the best guide book since Humphrey Clinker," a compliment which I treasure : and I dare say it is a good deal more readable than much of my better instructed and later work of the same kind. For since then I have been so much up and down Ireland, travelling for my pleasure first, and later for politics, that I can easily visualize almost the whole country : and last year when the London Midland and Scottish wanted a descriptive guide book in a hurry, I just sat down and wrote it out of my head as fast as pen could go. I needed merely one run to South Cork, which was less familiar to me—though even there politics had taken me, and I had been stoned in the market-place of Bandon, and had gone out from Skibbereen to hold a meeting near Baltimore, escorted by four car-loads of gentlemen with sticks.

The *Highways* book was only the beginning of this ; and after that I managed somehow to get to Donegal every year, till I and my bicycle were as well known on the roads as any tinker. But I got further afield when W. S. Green asked me in 1899 to go down and stay with him on Ballinakill Bay in the west of Galway.

Green was one of the most remarkable men I have known,

and certainly the most adventurous. He had some property, and while going through Trinity decided to take orders, and was early chosen for the parish of Carrigaline on Cork Harbour—his native place. But he had already shown other dispositions. During the American Civil War an officer came over looking for volunteers, and this long lank youth offered himself (I am not sure on which side) but was rejected; "You're split up too far," said the Yankee colonel, looking at Green's inordinate length of leg. But they were serviceable legs, and did a heap of mountain climbing; and just at the moment when he was appointed to his living, the New Zealand Government offered five thousand pounds to the first man who would get up Mount Cook. Expecting a race for it, the newly-chosen vicar telegraphed for his Swiss guide, and started, leaving word that he would "read himself in" when he returned. Presumably, he had a lenient bishop. He and the guide made a bold effort, but the mountain has two peaks, and they got up the wrong one after a climb in which they nearly lost their lives. Still, Green wrote a book about it which paid some of his expenses. This, however, was a divagation from his main interests, which lay on the sea and the coast. He had been brought up in a fishing village, and he took to fishing and boat sailing, adding a taste for marine zoology; and presently he conceived the idea of trawling in deep water, to see what forms of life the net would bring up. Nobody would subsidize him, but the British Museum offered to buy specimens, if rarities were got: so he chartered a steamer and trawled off the West Coast of Ireland where is as deep water as anywhere on the globe: and he got his rarities. Incidentally, he found mackerel spawn floating some distance outside the western chain of islands and drew the conclusion that mackerel must frequent these waters in May—when nobody fished for them.

He had also acquired the art of navigation; had taken out a Master's certificate, and had reached the conclusion that only one form of ecclesiastical preferment would have

suited him. "I would like," he said to me, "to have been chaplain on board a pirate." But something else contented him.

In 1891 Mr. Balfour established the Congested Districts Board, and one of its objects was to develop fisheries in the very poor districts along the west coast. Green's cousin, Sir Charles Ball the astronomer, proposed to the Chief Secretary that he should turn the rector of Carrigaline into an Inspector of Fisheries; and so it was done. That was one of the steps by which Mr. Arthur Balfour earned the approval of Connemara.

Green's problem was to turn fishermen used to working two hundred yards of net with canoes along the shores, into crews of strong boats fishing a mile of nets—and going out to sea. He brought seamen to show them how to do it, from Arklow in Wexford, and from Cape Clear, and from the Orkneys: and the instructors had to cope with islanders who would cheerfully undertake to ferry a bull from island to mainland in canoes made of tarred calico stretched over willow rods, but who lay down and wept and gave themselves up for lost if they were taken out of sight of land on board one of the smacks, nobbies, or other such craft.

Also, he had to cope with tradition; and when he proposed to fish for mackerel outside the islands in May, everybody knew they could only be caught inside the islands in autumn. Arklow men were sent down to fish from Aran in May, putting away out to sea, and for a week they fished and caught nothing. Word was sent to Green that the crews, although well paid, were sick of being laughed at and were about to give up; so he steamed up with the *Granuaile*, the Board's ship, which for two or three years he captained and worked himself on that most dangerous coast; and he found the boats coming in again empty, and the men ready, as he was told, to give up. But one boat was missing, and he steamed out to look for her. Presently he met her coming in and she had mackerel—not such as are caught in autumn, but big fish, a pound weight: and it was a time when mackerel were not

to be had. The catch was hurried off in ice to Liverpool, great prices were given, and for a week the fishing went on, largely in calms which checked fishing everywhere; the *Granuaile* towed the boats out to the grounds and towed them in with their catch. And so the spring mackerel fishing was established and Aran, which used to have a famine every five years, began to prosper, and has continued.

All this and much more Green told me in the fortnight I spent with him, for three or four days of it cruising in the *Granuaile* from one curing station to another. I found that he knew the whole coast line far better than I knew Donegal: for he was connected by his job with every aspect of the people's lives: not only fisheries, but redistribution of land, provision of buildings, provision of improved breeding stock, and so on, came into his work as Member of the Board. Not only that, but he had studied the coast's history; he could tell me that the castle on Inishbofin had been built in the time of Charles I to protect the fishing fleet of whatever European power was allied to England—since in those days the West of Ireland held the place now held by the Newfoundland Banks. But especially he had worked out the whole story of the Spanish Armada in its relation to Ireland and knew where each of its vessels had gone to ruin. The triumph of his research was over *La Rata*, Alonzo de Leyva's flagship. From the accounts, it was clear to Green, that *La Rata* had entered Blacksod Bay, and gone ashore within it; and from the study of documents, combined with his knowledge of the set of currents under conditions of such a wind as destroyed the Spanish, he felt sure he could know where she must have taken the ground so exactly that under favourable conditions he might find the wreck even in that huge sheet of water. He waited long for the chance of a spring tide, which would give him a low ebb, coinciding with bright weather, and an easterly wind to drive the ebb still further; but he got it at last, cruised about—and finally found her. Bits of *La Rata's* timbers were the proud ornament of his home.

Blackwood and other people let me write about all this development of industries among the western people; the homespuns in Donegal, Morton's Donegal carpets and the like—as well as the beauty of all these scenes, boats rowing across Ballinakill Bay to Mass on a fine Sunday, and all the women in indigo blue or madder red petticoats, rich heavy masses of colour in a country full of fields of crimson loose-strife—and the clean scent of bog myrtle, and the deep Atlantic blue of sea water on that coast, and the crying and wheeling of gulls about their cliff breeding places, and the fine courtesy of the “king” of one of the outlying islands coming down at the head of his people to greet us at the landing stage. So I began to be known as a sort of propagandist, and met the men who were directing these works—Horace Plunkett being chief of them. Also I met the singular and much beloved man of genius who was with Plunkett from the first, George Russell—“A.E.”

So far back as 1894, I had sent his tiny paper-covered volume, *Homeward: Songs by the Way*, to Moira O'Neill (who thought there was “too much diamond and amethyst in it”), and I had heard about the poet in Dublin; but my first meeting with him was in search of information about the co-operative land banks or credit societies which Plunkett was endeavouring to set up throughout the country. It should be recalled that Plunkett at this time had a dual capacity: he was Vice-President or Parliamentary Chief of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, and he was President of the Irish Agricultural Organization Society, which by 1900 had covered Ireland with a network of agencies promoting co-operation in all its forms. Plunkett's account was that when he wanted a man skilled in figures to help on the organizing side of this enterprise, Yeats came to him with the tale of a young poet and mystic, who habitually saw visions and conversed with fairies, and was in ordinary life the very competent cashier of a big shop. Remembering that Mr. Arthur Balfour had told him that mystics were often the most practically efficient people, Plunkett offered

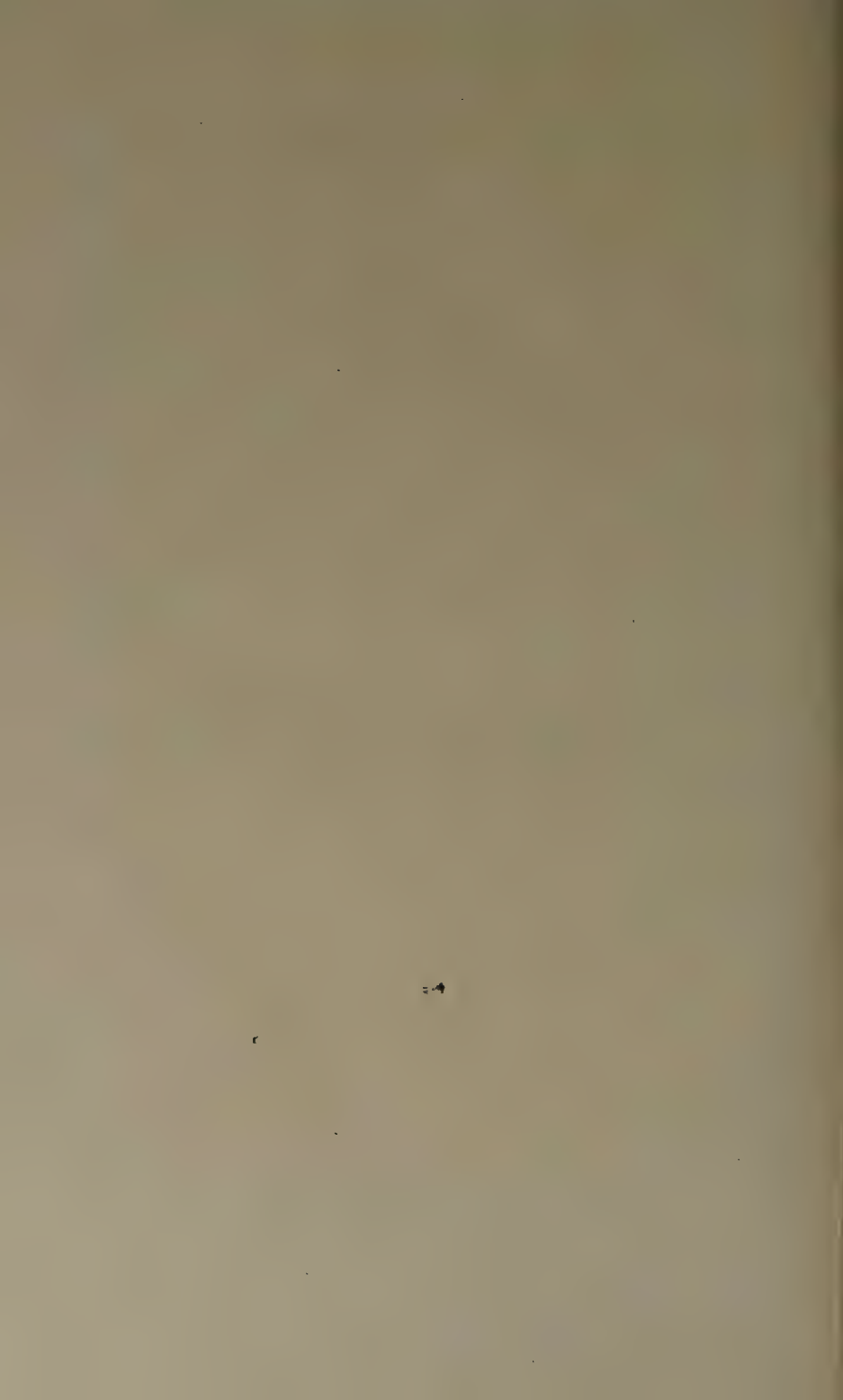


T. F. Geoghegan, Dublin.

GEORGE W. RUSSELL, 'A.E.'

BY COUNT MARKIEWICZ.

From the original in the Municipal Art Gallery, Dublin.



Russell the post : and (after a period of deliberating whether £150 a year was not the snare of riches) Russell accepted, and fully justified Mr. Balfour's observation.

I went to see him in the Society's Offices in Lincoln Place, and found him, as he still is to be found, surrounded by a strange litter of papers and drawings. He was then as the portrait here reproduced shows him, lean, with high cheek bones, and with large blue eyes looking out from over a bush of red beard ; also, he was then as he is now the easiest and friendliest creature in the world to talk to. We discussed my business, I suppose, and there is no one better able than "A.E." to expound the principles of an organization—especially when its purpose is to utilize the virtues. Neighbourliness is one of the best Irish virtues ; and if a poor man had the means to feed a pig but lacked the money to buy, his neighbours would know him and his circumstances and would on their joint security guarantee a loan for the price of a bonave—which bonave, consuming the food, would in certain months become a profitably saleable pig. "A.E." was eloquent (not rhetorical) about the wealth which lies in known honesty as a commercial asset ; and he produced statistics showing the result of many such advances on character. But presently we drifted on to other subjects—more particularly his visions. Here he had no need to describe, but fetched out drawings which he had made of the creatures as they stood before him—tall radiant men and women. I suggested that he first created in his mind the shapes he saw ; and, pointing to a serrated line of radiance which stood out along their backs (like the long fin on certain fish when they swim), said to him that he had been unconsciously directed by memory of the pictures of Red Indians. "No," said "A.E.," "it is the other way. Indians, being nearer to the primitive, constantly see these creatures of another order, and to make their chiefs seem godlike, they invented this plumed ornament to copy the flaming aura that is about the gods." I have never felt myself so completely and surprisingly answered. Of the two, which was the more believable—my hypothesis

or "A.E.'s" statement of fact? F.S. Oliver said to me not long ago that of all the men he had met, "A.E." was the most subtle, resourceful and resilient in argument.

These speculations of "A.E.'s" related themselves to a piece of work which I was doing; helping Dr. Yrjö Hirn, a Finnish professor, to put into English his work on *The Origins of Art*. In that very interesting volume, there is much speculation on such questions as the relation of shadows to substance, and on the widely spread belief that something of the original passes into a picture, so that to have power over the shadow or image gives a power over the self. All this came to be woven into the story of a novel which I wrote at this time, called *The Old Knowledge*—having Donegal for its background. The central figure in it was certainly suggested, not exactly by "A.E.," but by one of the stray disciples whom he had made in his peregrinations. But I owed an apology, and made it in the course of a letter asking for various information. Here is the characteristic reply, annexed to details about Departmental Statistics and Poultry Societies:

"I do not mind the slight use you made of me as copy. I have grown accustomed to it. Yeats began it and George Moore completed my education in this way. Nobody will ever know and it does not matter. I was thinking it would help the sale of the *Secret Rose*, the *Celtic Twilight*, *Evelyn Innes*, and *Sister Teresa*, and *The Old Knowledge* if I brought action for libel against you all. After deducting expenses, we could share profits on increased sales. I see infinite possibilities of amusement in this way if I ever get bored with the normal course of life. I could bring hosts of witnesses who will swear they were shocked at the attribution of the black art, love affairs with actresses, etc., to me, having always regarded me as above reproach.—If you want any further information for industrial articles, write."

The next of his letters that I have kept begins with his refusal to lecture before the Irish Literary Society in London:

"I have a horror of all Literary Societies, based not on

experience but upon ingrained prejudice, and I have a horror of London, based not upon prejudice but upon experience. I find that when I go over there, my soul absolutely won't go with me, and I am merely a body walking about while my soul is in retreat in some old mountain in Ireland. A man without a soul can't lecture. I believe seriously that London is hell and that I breathe in bits of dead souls at every instant. I dare say I might get accustomed to it if I went over for a little, but my soul might get tired waiting here for me and might reincarnate in another body and my state when I returned be worse than before."

The rest of that letter is concerned with the production of his own *Deirdre* and Yeats' *Cathleen ni Houlihan* by the "Literary Theatre," as the society was then called which later developed into the Irish National Players. It is one of my proudest memories that I took a hand in bringing over that company for the first time.

In March, 1902, I had been elected honorary secretary of the Irish Literary Society—or rather Barry O'Brien talked me into accepting that post. The Society had been founded some ten years earlier as part of the literary movement set on foot by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy. Rolleston had been prominent in its early years, so had Yeats; so had Alfred Graves, who was secretary before me. Barry O'Brien was chairman, and to a great extent was the Society; an admirable speaker, a good writer, a vehement Irish Nationalist, but not an easy man to get on with. I had no sooner assumed my post than I found the Society threatened with disaster by reason of a war between him and Mr. (now Sir) Charles Russell. Like so many Irish Societies, it had a rule against introducing religious or political topics into discussions; and, like the rest, it found this difficult to observe in practice—the more so, because a laudable part of its work was the group study of Irish history. Trouble arose over a paper read by my friend Philip Wilson—a most able historical student but possessed of a pen as violent as that of his father, Mr. E. D. J. Wilson, one of the chief

leader writers for the *Times*, especially on Irish subjects. (But Philip Wilson's Irish views were diametrically opposed to his father's.) Mr. Russell held that Barry O'Brien as Chairman of the meeting should have disallowed some of Wilson's observations, as being an infringement of the rule. Of the three men, Russell was the most placable which, seeing that he was son to Lord Russell of Killowen with much of his father's disposition, is not saying much; but Russell, though he would not go on as treasurer, consented to avoid an open breach: and I carried on. "A.E." was among the many people whom I beset with entreaty for lectures; and they did not all share his feeling about coming to London. Also I moved at once that we should somehow bring the Irish Players to London.

I had seen them twice in Dublin, and the first time is unforgettable. It was at the Molesworth Hall and one of the two plays performed in that unattractive auditorium was Yeats's *Cathleen ni Houlihan*. He had told me, years before, that he was trying to write a play presenting on the stage the legendary spirit of Ireland, and I laughed to myself at the fantastically impossible—and undramatic—conception. Well, here it was. Everybody now knows that masterpiece, but not many have seen it with Maud Gonne playing the part that was written about her: for that was what Yeats had done. From 1898 onwards—the centenary of the great rebellion—there had been a revival of the old physical force movement: the "Young Ireland" insurgency, transmitted by the more popular Fenian organization, gathered strength in the Irish reaction against the Boer War. Maud Gonne had put herself at the head of counter demonstrations on the occasion of Queen Victoria's visit to Dublin: she had more and more identified herself with the spirit of revolt; she had even married John McBride, the Irishman who headed the Irish Brigade in the Boer forces. Now, in this play before an audience only of some three or four hundred people, but evidently for the most part of her following, she appeared as the "Shan Van Vocht,"

or "Poor Old Woman" of Irish story and ballad. She came on, tall and gaunt, looking immeasurably aged, speaking her words in that sort of chant which we had all heard time and again from some half-demented beggar woman in the mountain parts ; and she asked for nothing less than all. The decent cottier and his wife, proud of their thrift, proud of the good marriage their boy was going to make, heard her and were courteous and hospitable to her, but bewildered. At first they take her for an evicted tenant, and their sympathy is ready ; but there is something wider and wilder in her talk ; and it brings back memories or hints of memories to the man. "It must be someone I knew when I was a boy." But it is to the young boy of to-day that she speaks clearly, telling him to leave stock and land and the bride that is ready for him, and give all, in answer to this ancient appeal.

The dialogue was shot with phrases that carried their double meaning to that audience and sent thrills through it ; and when at the last the old bent woman spoke her last words before she left, the tall figure straightened itself and took on beauty, that gave full meaning to the words of the boy who comes in : "Did you meet an old woman and you coming down the road."

"I did not, but I met a young woman and she had the walk of a queen."

Nobody else has played the part as it was played by her, and nobody else could. I came away wondering if such things should be written unless the writer were prepared to see men go out and act on them—as undoubtedly she was, who played the "Shan Van Vocht." We have seen the men come out : and I have seen also, by a strange irony, Maud Gonne waiting at the gates of a barrack held by troops of the Irish State, and seeking news of her son, who was their prisoner.

That play stood apart ; but even in the other performances which I saw in Dublin it seemed clear to me that one encountered the thing which the Stage Society in London was

looking for and not finding: something entirely outside the range of the commercial theatre, yet a living new work of art, both in the writing and the acting. I urged our Committee to risk the expense of bringing over the company, even for a day's performance; and it was agreed.

We took a tiny place, the Queen's Gate Hall in Kensington, for a Saturday in May, 1903. The actors were then all engaged in other businesses, mostly in shops: W. G. Fay, the only one with any professional experience (he had been in some travelling company) was a working electrician, twisting wires all day. They were to travel on Friday night, and play six plays—two triple bills—on the Saturday; returning on Sunday to be at their work by Monday morning.

But they suggested that for one of the plays—Yeats's *Hourglass*—we should provide two children to learn and speak two very short parts. The committee was full of fond parents eager to supply this requirement and we asked for the parts. Two days later I came down and inquired if these had been sent. Our general secretary said they had come indeed—but she looked as if she had more to say. "People don't seem to like them," was all the explanation I got, till I went into the club rooms, where was a perturbed group. Barry O'Brien spoke up. He had been reading the play: it was beautiful and religious, he said, and perfect in its morals; but still: Here is my boy, and here is what he will have to say when the wise man questions him. "Is there a heaven? is there a hell? is there a purgatory?" "Oh no, father. There is nothing we cannot see, there is nothing we cannot touch. Foolish people used to think there was, but you are very wise: you have taught us better." "Now," said Barry O'Brien, "this is to be the first time my boy will speak in public from any platform and I do not want these to be the first words that he will utter publicly."

There was nothing for it but to offer up my own innocents—but the boys were at school; so my eldest daughter, aged seven, was annexed; and for the other part I commandeered Geoffrey Dearmer, a couple of years older.

My first impression of Fay in private life is with a hat on the back of his head, busily driving nails to hold the properties together on the Saturday morning. I was introduced to all the company and could promise them a full house. It was with great difficulty that we packed everybody in; and when I saw the audience my heart sank. I had then some repute as a critic and had drawn on it to the utmost, telling all the mighty that they must come: and there was Archer, Walkly and all the band—as well as other literary folk. An old letter from Henry James makes me aware that I did not omit him. It was written after the event: he had not come, but could say that he had seen “our dramatic day spoken of with respect in several quarters”: he hoped “the charge would be again sounded.” “The Irish note that is not the note of convention has a charm all its own.” I knew that; but I was mortally afraid that I might have been wrong in my appreciation of acting and drama—in which I had not complete trust.

It went well, the only trouble being that noises from behind disturbed the performance: Sheila and Geoffrey were playing football with Fay's bowler hat. They were both too young to have any nerves and got through their impieties admirably: both had a candour of aspect that was perfect for the occasion. At the end, the great ones signified their approval—Archer with unusual warmth—and I returned to my home happy and justified, feeling all was well. Half an hour before the evening show, I went down to see about the seating; and there Fay met me with panic in his face. Miss Quinn, who was to take the leading rôle in all three plays of the evening had collapsed and taken to her bed. He wanted to call the show off.

I asked then about an understudy. He said it was impossible, but in theory there was one, Miss Maire nic Shiub-laidhe (pronounced Mary Walker). I had shaken hands with this beautiful person, and she had the grip of a vice, so I asked to see her. She had played one of the parts, she had rehearsed another, and thought she knew the third.

She was willing to chance it. So, remembering her hand-grip, was I. But it seemed only kind to relieve the other lady's anxiety and I despatched a note across the street to her hotel, saying that she need be in no concern, as Miss Walker was going to play the parts. Within ten minutes Miss Quinn was in the theatre. Before the curtain rose I came and explained how she had risen from a bed of sickness, lest they should be disappointed, and asked the indulgence of the audience. She came on with a bottle of smelling salts in one hand which she kept behind her : and we clapped every line she spoke. By the middle of the second item she could dispense with the salts.

Frank Fay, the other day in Dublin, remembered all this and remembered that he had admired my diplomacy. I confess now that Miss Quinn's recovery was wholly unforeseen by me. I acted in real kindness of heart, and it paid.

That was nearly the last of Miss Quinn's period as leading lady in that company for she married the "juvenile lead," Mr. Dudley Digges, and went off and the two seemed irreplaceable. Mr. Digges was a greater loss, for he acted and spoke well and he was a man of handsome stature. The two Fays were in a much higher class as actors ; W. G. Fay had genius, and F. J. Fay spoke verse with rare beauty ; but both were smaller than most small men. Still, this mattered the less because in that company brains and stature did not go together. Padraic Colum, the poet, was of its members, and I remember the clean-cut beauty of his profile as an attendant in one of Yeats's plays ; but he looked about five feet four. A more considerable actor was George Roberts, then a writer of verse but afterwards a publisher (as Maunsell and Company) and he, if taller than the Fays, was shorter than Colum. For a company that wanted to put on plays of the Irish hero cycle, they were singularly short of height. Fortunately, however, in the legends Cuchulain is somewhere described as being a little man ; and Yeats and Lady Gregory laid full stress on this passage.

But in spite of their physical drawbacks, in spite of the

withdrawal of two leading performers, the company gained in strength, and in the quarter of a century through which it has lived seems to have thriven like a tree all the better for pruning. There was a period about 1920 when it seemed for the first time unable to produce new and notable talent ; now, with the very same players, it has made itself more admired than ever.

Its serious capture of London began, I think, at our second venture for, in March, 1904, the Irish Literary Society risked taking a regular theatre—though only for three performances. I remember less clearly about this occasion for I was then more or less an invalid : but I do not forget my interview with Miss Kate Sankey, who let us the Royalty Theatre. Failing to come to terms by correspondence, I went to the lady's house. She was reputed to be ill in bed. I sent up a note expressing my profound grief—and renewing our proposal ; and waited in her sitting-room among enormous photographs of the profession with signatures seven inches long, while on the hearth there smouldered a noble Yule-log, emitting the familiar scent of gas. A pencilled note came down, indecisive, and I renewed my sympathies and my entreaties : never before or since was I so prodigal of blandishments ; and after about three exchanges I was invited upstairs—when I guessed at the feelings of Queen Elizabeth's courtiers in the later period of her reign. But I got my theatre at a very reasonable rent, and we filled every seat in it for the three performances with an outlay of thirty shillings on advertisement ; and all my subsequent experience of stage productions has increased my pride.

That repertory included Synge's *Riders to the Sea*—most perfect of all the Irish plays ever produced. Miss Sara Allgood had not got then the part of the mother, in which she became famous ; that was played and very finely played by Miss Helen Laird (now Mrs. Constantine Curran). I thought, and she thought, that two plays in succession with coffins as their chief accessories (for they opened with *The Shadow of the Glen*) would have been too much for my audi-

ence. But, as she said, "when I heard them in the audience begin to cough and choke, I knew I had them, and I let another awful wail out of me."

That time we were able to hand over £20 to the Irish National Theatre; and thereafter they came to London on their own. But they came now as an organized company with Fay as manager and they must consent to receive pay (as much as seven and sixpence a week). They had begun as a self-governing group of amateurs—as a Soviet in short—and many of them resented the new arrangement. So came a schism, and new departures: Miss Laird dropped out, so did Roberts and Miss Garvey, and I think also Seumas O'Sullivan the poet, whose name when he acted was Starkey. But the Abbey Theatre was built and inhabited. Miss Horniman's generosity provided the funds, moved by her zeal for dramatic art. She knew that these Irish people were doing, both as writers and as actors, invaluable work. But Irish Nationalism made no appeal to her, and some of its vagaries tried her patience. I have heard a legend that when a banner bearing Runic inscriptions was desired for one of the plays, she knew the craftsman to get it from and instructed him. "Write upon it in Runic," she said, "'This is the damned Celt'." And he wrote; and according to the legend it waved over the heads of the Abbey players time and again.

The proper work of the Irish Literary Society itself, apart from providing a centre or club for Irish people, consisted in organizing lectures and the like. I remember before my task as secretary began seeing and hearing there two illustrious Ulstermen—the great Lord Dufferin and Lord Russell of Killowen; it is curious to think that the Northern Protestant had all the beguiling charm that people attribute to Galway or Kerry, while Russell, the Northern Catholic, was as dour and fierce as an Orangeman ever has been or could be. General Sir William Butler lectured for us more than once and it was no small favour, for nobody I think ever possessed more perfectly the gift of writing prose

intended to be spoken : and the tall superb Tipperary man had a voice that could have carried across any barrack square yet was pleasantly modulated. I saw much more of him later on, but recall one characteristic passage from his lecture on Cromwell, which was a soldier's indictment, as well as a Catholic's. Cromwell, he said, gave Irish Catholics their choice—"hell or Connaught. After the Restoration his bones were lifted up, burnt and scattered at Tyburn tree. Connaught Square to-day stands where Tyburn tree did : he can have the choice he offered."

There were other evenings called "Original Nights," when members of the Society came and produced their own compositions. These were chiefly in request for musicians : Mrs. Milligan Fox often brought over some young singer. But literary persons also read their works and Herbert Trench stands out in my memory : handsome creature that he was, dark hair and dark eyes suggesting an affinity with that Italy to which he at last migrated. He was then one of the half-dozen poets attached to the Board of Trade (Edmund Gosse, Austin Dobson and Samuel Waddington being some of the others) and his house at Richmond, one of the charming old white-fronted houses looking over the river, was adorned by two or three superb Steers. Even when one passed in the street on a summer day, one could see their superb blueness.

Very little of Trench's work in poetry seems to stand the test, and he was rash enough to adventure on retailing Irish legends without knowing how the names were pronounced : thus in his *Deirdre Wed* the hero is called Naois, which he makes an Italian trisyllable : but its real pronunciation is "Neesh"—so that most poets choose the alternative form "Naisi." But there are a few passages in him of supreme beauty and one lyric ("When man was hounded from Eden") which I am certain will never die.

I like to recall two traits of him. In 1903 I had a breakdown and was laid up for some weeks. There came a letter from Trench whom I knew very slightly, saying he was

sorry and asking if a hundred pounds would be of any use to me. The other is that in 1914 he wrote to me from Italy: "If Ulster really fights, I really must be there, if only to push a wheelbarrow, on the other side. So, if it is possible to send you a few pounds or to lend a hand, let me know."

I was in the chair at one of these "Original Nights" when a lady member produced her setting of a poem by Yeats. It was, I have no doubt, very skilfully written and it was capably sung, but gave me no pleasure—and as it chanced, Yeats was there. Sheer malice made me ask him to get up and tell us what he thought of it. Yeats rose and with the queer undulation of voice and gesture characteristic of him, said that the setting of that poem reminded him of a story he had heard about an old king, much beloved of his people, who used to deliver his judgments sitting on his seat in the sun. The people, desiring to show their admiration for the old king who looked so stately there, took counsel together and made a simple canopy for his seat; and under it the old king looked more beautiful than ever and they were delighted with what they had done. So delighted were they that they went on embellishing the canopy, adding to it, complicating it with every ingenious ornament, till at last it was the most beautiful canopy in the world: but the old king was completely lost to sight.

These are my words, not those of the poet, and I cannot reproduce the courtesy and dexterity and beauty of the sentences by which he extracted himself triumphantly out from the difficulty in which I had tried to put him. I have been wondering ever since if that reply could by any possibility have been actually thought out and phrased on the spur of the moment—whether he had not at some time before given the thought shape and body, so that it was a weapon ready to his hand.

Yeats and "A.E." reach an excellence as speakers which they do not surpass as writers of prose. At his best, Yeats is perhaps the best speaker I ever listened to—though in a style wholly his own.

About this time I joined a very different Irish organization—the Gaelic League: and my first tutor in the national language was a London bobby. This big, handsome young Kerryman had some difficulty in passing the tests in English required for his service, and preferred exchange of lessons to payment. I very soon found that there were sounds in Irish which defeated me: a “v” that is half a “w,” and the aspirated “d’s” and “g’s”—as well as certain diphthongs. Otherwise the tongue came much easier to me than German, and the pursuit of it amused me a great deal. One of the little primers was always in my pocket, and in buses and trains my study progressed. My wife took to it too, but did not get so quickly to a smattering, though she is a much better linguist than I have ever been, for the simple reason that I could easily think in the sort of English that is spoken in Gaelic Ireland. Indeed English friends who have been with me in the West of Ireland often thought it an affectation that I should answer “He is, that” or “I will not, then,” instead of “Yes” or “No,” when I was completely unaware of altering my way of speech.

But to get a real mastery of Irish is not easy, if only because of the richness of vocabulary. I arrived only at one degree of competence: I could talk Irish all day out fishing; that vocabulary grew familiar, and more than once I have been out for days together with a man who spoke little English. Once indeed, I dear bought it, as we say. At Carna, in Connemara, I was sent out with the raggedest gilly I ever encountered and began to try my Irish on him. Floods were loosed. He told me of the dreadful times he endured, out with anglers talking English to him, and how he would be answering “Yes” or “No” at a venture and his head going *three na chailye* all the time. God knows my head also was topsy-turvy the same day, trying to keep pace with his talk.

We used to go to classes of an evening and the best teacher I found was an Irish oculist who is now professor of Irish in Galway. But by far the most charming personality connected

with the movement was Michael Breathnach (Mike Walsh), the young lad from Connemara who acted as general secretary : good to look at, good to be with, good as gold every way. The life was too hard for him, with its perpetual running from place to place and consumption got a hold ; he died in Switzerland leaving a gracious memory in the minds of all who knew him.

It is more than likely that among the young men whom I met one time and another chatting in his office was a much more famous Michael : for Mick Collins was an active member of the London Gaelic League. The only one, however, that I remember clearly was Mr. Art O'Connor, who has in the past five or six years received much attention from the British Government—and has even succeeded in extracting from them a large sum, to compensate for the hospitality forced upon him in one of His Majesty's jails. But in these days he was known to us as the leading authority on traditional Irish dancing—on which subject he had written a handbook.

That recalls to me an odd spectacle. All my cousins of the County Limerick clan were in their youth instructed by one of the old dancing masters who went from house to house imparting their science. Dermod O'Brien of Cahirmoyle and his sisters were notable performers ; but nobody equalled Nan Monsell, who has since sat in the seats of the mighty as wife of a Member of Council in British India. Once or twice I induced her to come down and give an exhibition at the Irish Literary Society's evenings, so she was asked to dance a jig at some big Gaelic festival in, I think, the Queen's Hall. Her partner was a champion dancer whose belt was hung with medals ; and the performance was the most strangely assorted thing I ever beheld. For there are two traditions, and the Kerry tradition, in which she had been bred, is the less severe. So there on the platform was the champion, with his arms hanging straight by his side, his eyes looking as rigidly to the front as if he were a guardsman on parade : his body stiff from his hips

up, and, as far as the spectators could see, wholly detached from the swift intricate motions which a pair of feet were performing two yards below that dumb countenance ; while beside him Nan, swift and intricate as he, with the foot-beats doubled and trebled in unison with his, all the time sidled and glanced and danced with every inch of her—the picture of provocation.

Her sister, Eily Monsell, was only less good as a dancer than she ; but Eily in these days was going through the Slade School and to all appearance rather more than holding her own with another astonishing Irish student, then known to us simply as Billy Orpen. One of the things that the Irish Literary Society did was to hold a small exhibition of the work of some young Irish artists in its rooms at 20 Hanover Square ; and that was, so far as I know, the first public show of Orpen's work. I knew then that I ought to sell my shirt to invest in some of the early pencil drawings of this young man : but lacked the courage. Yet I realized then how much more remarkable than the exquisite studies of his wife and child were some sinister drawings in coloured chalk, showing a strange macabre imagination. Three blind men, shuffling round a corner, obviously on their way to knife somebody, have haunted me since ; and I remembered them when I looked at his pictures of the war, nearly twenty years later. I saw most of the pictures that came from that source of inspiration, but Orpen's alone made me realize for the first time what had been passing before my eyes during long tedious months. There was executive talent of the first order suddenly brought under a stimulus that called genius into motion. There is one picture of a soldier stark mad and stark naked, holding his rifle as if it were a flute, which might be Synge's work in another medium : the same fantastic imagination, the same intensity, the same distortion moulded to beauty—as if a satyr had been at play.

Eily Monsell, his early rival, afforded another example to convince me that happy marriage starves the artistic

impulse in a woman: the subconscious self gets other pre-occupations.

All these activities of mine were leading me to identify myself more and more closely with Ireland—and to try and bring Irish elements together. For instance, I persuaded Mr. Lecky to subscribe to the funds of the Gaelic League—though he was inclined to think the movement amounted only to “self sacrifice for an unattainable object and one which would help very little in the battle of life.” And he would not identify himself with it by contributing over his own name. We had made friends over the Boer War—meeting, I think, at Mrs. Stopford Green’s house (where also I first met Mary Kingsley—one of her intimates). Mr. Lecky was the more disposed to be friendly because my father had by his request been his proposer when he stood for Trinity College, and had in proposing this eminent literary man achieved an epigram which is remembered. “Trinity has been,” he said, “always represented by distinguished lawyers; but as soon as they got into the saddle, they assumed the position of King William’s statue in College Green: their faces were always fixed towards the Castle and their backs turned on Trinity.”

Alone of the Members for Trinity, Lecky is commemorated by a statue in the College square. It scarcely recalls, however, the quaintness of that tall gentle figure, surely the most angular that ever was seen. He was never cut out for success in Parliament, but nobody of his time helped more to a decent understanding of the Irish question than did that candid intelligence by his writings. Evidently Parliament bored him. One of his letters to me says:

“I hope to go to *Ulysses*, but at present I go very little to the theatre and I hear so much of the human voice during five days of the week that I rather gladly escape it on the sixth.”

His wife, tall and gaunt as he, had none of his eccentricity: indeed, there never was a more distinguished *grande dame* than that old Dutch lady. She said very little about the

Boer War, but that little was eloquent of resentment. Both were very serious, but I never felt in either of them that total lack of humour which estranges. Lecky could scarcely be said to joke, but he could be amused, and let you share his amusement. I had sent him my first book of verse and after compliments, he continued :

“ I fear the poetic market (with very few exceptions) is a discouraging one—but the seed sometimes falls on good ground—often in very out-of-the-way and unexpected places. A small attempt of my own found an enthusiast in a Hungarian Bishop in Buda Pesth who translated part of it into his tongue.”

I do not recommend anybody to read Mr. Lecky's poems : but in prose, only one who has written an Irish history will realize how far ahead of all competitors in that field he stands both by manner and by matter.

Those poems of mine had no luck in the poetic market, though Lane published them pleasantly in a cover of Mabel Dearmer's designing. After they had appeared, I wrote two others which I hoped might be of interest to Irish people at large and brought them out with some of the Irish verses from the first volume in a little paper-covered book. One of the two new ones was a thing entitled *The Song of Defeat* : a lyrical summary of Irish history, glorifying what has always seemed to me best in Irish national spirit, a constant loyalty to its heroes when they failed. That was the theme of the first public speech that I ever made. It was in 1903, when the centenary of Emmet's death was celebrated in London and I met Willy Redmond for the first time then on the platform of the Holborn Town Hall.—I met him last in Flanders when I was in hospital at the convent in Locre, not twenty yards from where a few months later his grave was dug and where it is still tended

The *Song of Defeat* was written not long after the Holborn meeting, and it had its first publication at the Irish Literary Society when I read it aloud ; and Barry O'Brien, with whom there had been one of the intermittent rows, was reconciled

and embraced me publicly. Thereafter I showed it to Seumas MacManus, the ex-schoolmaster from Donegal who had won repute as a writer of short stories; and through him (I think at his suggestion) it was passed on to *United Ireland*, the paper in which Arthur Griffith was laying the foundations of Sinn Féin. I set down all this because it shows how close together at that time were all the forces in Irish life that later diverged so far apart. All I knew of *United Ireland* was that it was brilliantly written and stressed very strongly the encouragement of Irish industries, and the like, and that it had received practical support from Yeats and other leaders in the literary movement. With much of it I didn't agree, but it was a live thing in Ireland, and no more hostile than Plunkett's Unionism.

I know now that this poem of mine appealed strongly to many of the young men who were afterwards vehemently opposed to me in politics; and they have thought that I had run away from their flag—just as I have been blamed by Mr. William O'Brien for deserting Lord Dunraven, whom I never met till 1917.

The other poem which I wanted to make easily accessible for an Ireland (which has never shown any sign of crowding the approaches to my work), was a ballad about one of the stories of Ossian and St. Patrick: and here again Seumas MacManus comes in. I was staying with him at Mount Charles on Donegal Bay when he told it me—and told me how he had got it. Away up on the hills was an old man with a great store of these tales, and Macmanus went to him; but he lay bedridden in a hovel which had no window and was so dark that Macmanus wrote the tale down, lying on the scraws of sod that were the roof, and listening through the hole in them which served for a chimney.

One of the first interests of my life at that time was to seek out the inheritors of such knowledge; and once in Donegal, by accident, I hit on the report of an Irish speaker who could tell tales all night. I found him on his farm, a man about sixty, who could neither read nor write; but

a volume could have been filled with ancient Irish poems from his recitation. Laboriously, with very little knowledge, I wrote one down—for it was “in oul’ crabbed Irish”—and laboriously went through it with him, watching his endeavours to get an English word to render the exact meaning. There were places where he could not translate; but as to letting me try to amend, or altering the word himself, he was fierce about the proposal. “You are here to write and you be to write it down every word the way I tell it to you.” He was a guardian of a tradition: a scholar without letters.

Away out in the West of that wide country too, I made a friend who spoke Irish habitually but had none of this transmitted love: all I got from him was a modern poem in praise of a whisky still. But he was a reader of books and a great lover of literature, and perhaps this letter from him may give some sense of the charm which he and his like have for those who love them. He was my gilly at Carrick near Slieve League, and on a Sunday my wife and I went to meet him after Mass as he came out of chapel. With great ceremony, he introduced us there to his wife; we talked a little and went on our way. Thereafter we used to send him books now and then. Then one day came this:

“Dear friend Mr Gwynn,

I am once more going to try to find you out. I hope my good Mrs. Brave Rosa will come to meet you at the Gate of Heaven as you came to meet her that Sunday at the Chappel Gate of Carrick. On the second day of December last she passed away from this life which gave me a great downfall and trouble; but for that I would know more about you. I seen that letter you wrote in Irish. I was glad of your mendment in the Irish language. I got the Book. I read Irish but I never try to write it. You are a real Irishman now. If it is allowed that you get these my words I know you will kindly let me know about yourself and good lady. My blessing and good wishes to you all from your poor old gilly. Now as ever I will remain

Yours truly,

CHARLES CARRE.”

And on another page he added:

"Mrs Gwynn

Kind Lady and Friend,

There is one thing and one alone to make me forget Brave Rosa, Mr. Gwynn and you all that showed honour and Respect to her, and that one thing is the pang of death."

Quite different aspects of Western Ireland arise, when I think of an episode that led to a lasting friendship. I had been writing so much about Irish fishings that people consulted me; and Arthur Cane, husband of my cousin Mary O'Brien, wrote on behalf of his friend, F. S. Oliver, who wanted to take an Irish river—but at a low rent, for in those days Oliver's business career was only beginning. I heard somehow of a stretch of the Owenmore falling into Blacksod Bay near the town of Bangor Erris ("town" is here used in the Irish sense), and so the fishing was taken. Later came to me a letter saying that the men who were to accompany Oliver had been prevented; and would I—being then in Dublin—go down to join him? (My friends did not tell me that they were speculating what would happen, for this was in the middle of the Boer War and both Fred Oliver and I had strong, but by no means identical, political opinions.) I agreed joyfully and we met at Broadstone Station. One other man was in our carriage, also with fishing tackle. We got out maps and began discussing prospects hopefully, when the other passenger intervened. "Excuse me," said he to me, "but I understand from your conversation that you are going to Bangor Erris. Are you quite sure that you know what you are in for?" "For God's sake," said I, "do not frighten this man, he has never been in Ireland before." I explained then that Oliver had rented a fishing, and a fishing lodge. At this the stranger's face cheered a little. "I don't know of any lodge," he said, "but so long as you aren't going to the hotel!" We went on, after this warning, and arranged to lunch at the railway hotel in Mallaranny, send on our kit by outside car and ourselves speed rapidly on bicycles over the twenty miles of road, which showed flat on the map.

The programme was carried out up to the point of luncheon ; but as we sat over coffee an elderly man came over to us from another table. " I understand your name is Gwynn," he said. " I don't know you, but I know your father and I hear you are going to Bangor Erris. I've come to tell you to turn back to Dublin. It's no place for Christians and they'll stable donkeys in the room with you."

This discouraging person proved to be Mr. Robert Scott who was " clerk of the weather," and I told Oliver that his occupation had depressed his outlook. We set out and for a while both rejoiced in the huge expanses of moor and bog about us and the scent of bog myrtle. Presently the straight length of road opened out like a straight level tape through that vast bog-land ; and straight and level the wind blew down it in our faces. We went on for about an hour and a half, and met a man—the first—and I asked how far we were from Bangor Erris. About sixteen miles, he said. We went on to the next man we met, perhaps half an hour later, and I asked how far we were from Mallaranny. "About seven mile," he said. We went on and at last we came to a house with three bicycles parked outside it. This was the focal centre of the district, and dispensary doctors converged upon it for society. (It was of course a " licensed premises.") Within, the dispensary doctors agreed in laying us five pounds to a bottle of champagne that we would not get a salmon within a month. By the mercy of Providence, we were able to hire a car and with our bicycles sitting on our knees we drove very leisurely to Bangor Erris and discovered the " lodge." It had some appearance of civility : there had been blinds, and the rollers remained, with fragments of the calico adhering. One room had been papered, by a tenant of sporting tastes, and the design showed a hound chasing a hare ; but in parts of the wall the paper was inverted so that the chase pursued upside down. Conroy explained that the man that came out from Ballina to paper it " went on the tear" while he was at the job.

Conroy was the redeeming feature of the establishment.

He was a clean pleasant handy Irishman and he assured us that he had engaged the best cook in Connaught. I had a fleeting glimpse of her and recognized her for what we used to know as a mountainy cutty. She wore shoes as if unaccustomed to them, and after a couple of days returned to her bare feet. Also, Conroy did the cooking himself, after two days' trial.

Next morning we went out, put up our rods by the first of the water, and I, thinking that it looked as if it might hold white trout, waded in, and within five minutes was fast in a salmon. But in these days I had a foolish prejudice against anglers with too elaborate tackle, and had just put up an old cast with flies on that I had fished the autumn before. I deserved that there should be a weak place in it, and there was : it broke without rhyme or reason and we did not at once confute the dispensary doctors. But some pools further up Fred rose a salmon. For a week or so thereafter we fished and never saw a fish except the one which had risen at Fred and used to rise occasionally—but took, never. Then, Dan Keary came to call upon us, offering flies. From him I learnt that the fish which I hooked was one that had been overlooked by the poachers and that they had netted him the same evening and held a kind of indignation meeting over his corpse : for there was feeling. This fishing had been free and they resented the attempt to preserve it. The other salmon was in a hole full of rocks and could not therefore be netted.

But Dan spoke to us of another little river away up in the mountains which was the best white trout river in Ireland. We went there under his escort on a day of heavy rain and did not find fault with his opinion, for we killed eighteen trout weighing thirty pounds in the afternoon. A couple of days later, a gentleman turned up alleging that we had poached his water ; but Fred pacified him and we got leave to fish it as we liked. Whether he had a right to it or not I never ascertained ; but I never had a better day's fishing.

Another man had joined us and I left him and Fred to

keep each other company one night while Dan took me to call on the local publican who had great knowledge of the fairies. It was a severe evening, for there was great provision of whisky on the table but neither my host nor Dan would raise his glass unless I did so. I came away at about two o'clock and found the other men feloniously waiting up for me. They looked amused and when I began to tell them that I had spent the evening with a man who took a trigonometrical survey of a leprachaun, I understood why. Those are difficult words after a severe evening. But I had wit enough to scribble down some notes (with a splitting head) before I turned in, and I got the material for the only good piece of fiction I ever wrote, the story of a witch's curse and a flood.

About the leprachaun, I may explain that when my host, the leading citizen of Bangor Erris, saw the little green fellow hopping along on the roadside, and duiking and diving, he thought this was something "not nathural"; but, being a man of education and a road contractor, he decided to get a telegraph pole between him and the object: and "if it was how that it came out neither on the one side of the pole nor on the other side of the pole, it would be a thrigonometrical demonstration that it was something shupernatural that was in it."

Neither Fred Oliver nor I tried to drown the other in a bog-hole by reason of our political differences; we have continued for the past quarter of a century to discuss all manner of things, but politics in particular, and still more particularly in relation to Ireland, without breach of friendship. I had no inkling then how far the most successfully prosperous of all the men I knew this one was going to be; but still less did I foresee that after his position in the business was firmly fixed, he would come invading my province, and (after getting me to criticize the manuscript) achieve a far greater reputation than mine ever was or will be. Very few men grudge success to work so solid, yet so subtle, as his has been in literature, and assuredly I did not. But for many

years I have resented the ironic dispensation which gives so much, and withheld the simple endowment of ordinary good health, which should have completed his career. Even from outside direct political life, his influence has been considerable, but the House of Commons and Ministerial office would have been the proper field for the wisdom and the humour of this most longheaded and most lovable Scot.

One of the many pleasant things which this friendship brought me in those now far-off years was access to a game. The Olivers then lived in Kensington Square, and their house, which had once been a school, possessed an Eton fives court instead of the ordinary back garden. There on Sunday mornings a knot of us collected: Oliver himself, and his partner Ernest Debenham, Malcolm MacNaghten and Ronald McNeill were assiduous: so was one of the most attractive men I ever met, Arthur Llewellyn Davies; and his beautiful wife, Du Maurier's daughter, used to come down and look on. Another player, and rather a good player, was the now Mr. Justice Rowlatt—then only on his way to the bench. Another notability of the courts, though not of quite the same category, appeared there, introduced by some fellow Etonian as an exceptional performer; and, indeed, whatever else may be said about Mr. Gerald Bevan, he was a wonderful fives player.

The ladies who looked on did not take a hand in that game; it would have to be too hard a hand for most of their sex. But once, going on from there to lunch at somebody's house, I found myself sitting next to a celebrated actress of great beauty and stature; and found also that conversation was hard to make. By way of apologizing for my shortcomings I said that I was stupid with fatigue after much fives playing—when to my amazement her lovely countenance lit up and her whole presence became animated. The proudest memory of her professional career was that, going down to play *Rosalind* and some other part at a school, she took on the head boy at fives between the performances and beat him. We talked fives till coffee came. . . . Some

months or years later, I was again fortunate enough to be this lady's neighbour at table and unfortunate enough to find nothing to talk about, till in despair, remembering my earlier experience, I fell back on fives ; and again all went well. Recollection of this has always explained much to me about the modern English theatre.

CHAPTER IX

A REST CURE IN MOROCCO

MY first and only experience of travel outside Europe came to me by way of a rest cure. The year 1903 was more prosperous for my work than any year of my life—the only time my earnings ever got into four figures—but in the late autumn insomnia laid me up. Various doctors had a look at me and all reached the same diagnosis which expressed itself by taking my wife out of the room and asking how many whiskies and sodas I drank between lunch and dinner. When this opinion proved to be mistaken, they seemed to have no other suggestion; but, later, one at Bath showed more resource and made me take to using glasses. The following spring, when I was well on the mend, I lectured before an audience in Dublin about Thomas Moore (whose life I was then writing for the *English Men of Letters*). Old Dr. Sigerson, the Gaelic scholar, was in the chair and afterwards seized me and told me I was suffering from neurasthenia—the first time I ever heard that bad word—and that I was to come and be overhauled. I protested, but he was firm, and did some impressive thing to me with electricity, which I think was hocus-pocus. But he had not been a friend and pupil of Charcot for nothing, and gave me medicines by which I have been able ever since to cope with any symptoms of the sleeplessness that comes from too much worry. That wise old man would not let me blame it on work, which, he said, never hurt anybody.

But at the time when I was bedridden, the doctors firmly prescribed a rest cure : and I wanted to go and shoot snipe—or shoot at them—in Kerry. This was forbidden : I must sit in the sun. Somebody suggested Morocco. It so fell out, the Macmillans had asked me to revise the English version of Professor Westermarck's book on the *Origin of Moral Ideas*. I began to think I knew something about Finns and Finland, for I had not only helped Dr. Hirn through, but also some Finnish lady's novel passed through my hands—my chief job being to delete the frequent interpolations in her narrative. The progress of a love affair would be interrupted by two or three lines (in brackets) setting out the composition of some sandwiches that were handed round at tea. My generalization made all Finns small dark people, and I was not prepared for the large solid spectacled Scandinavian who entered to my bedside. If anybody may be rightly called famous, it is this savant, who takes twelve years to write a book and then it is translated into twelve languages ; but I was then completely ignorant about the author of the work on *Marriage Customs*, in which so many passages have to be decently veiled in Latin. Nor did I know that though domiciled in Finland, and by his professorship bound to London, he kept the home of his heart in Morocco. My destination was settled from the moment he entered. Nobody who would avoid visiting Morocco should go near Westermarck. With all his eighteen stone of gymnastically trained avoirdupois, he crushed out the mere possibility of my going anywhere else. As for considering the country unsafe to travel in, he brushed the notion aside : he had himself lived as a guest with the principal persons, who were wrongly spoken of as robbers ; and his guide was a Shereef, descendant of Muley Idris (founder of Islam in Morocco) and under the protection of his hereditary sanctity, I could go anywhere. The Government indeed might rob me ; but fortunately there was, for all practical purposes, no government. I understood generally that I was to have the position of a person visiting Ireland

under the special protection of the "League"; and that was good enough for me. I went. Westermarck saw me off, almost weeping, like some Brobdingnagian schoolboy; but weeping, not because he had to go, but because he had to stay behind.

One of my friends described recently a visit to Morocco, like mine, in winter; and our experiences agreed in this, that we found it abominably wet and cold. Otherwise, the change made in twenty years is so great as to be almost comic. He travelled everywhere in motors driven at break-neck speed; he stopped everywhere in European hotels—subject always to the condition that he must not stop a second night, because everywhere every bed was bespoken in relays; and he came back disgruntled, after being whirled through a sort of merry-go-round. The Morocco of 1904 had no roads, no bridges and, except at Tangier, scarcely any Europeans. There was also, except in the walled towns, no law: for the Sultan of the day was Sultan "with opposition."

The superb young Moor who met me in his blue cloak and braided jacket made me feel the inferiority of my much worn old ulster: but he was as friendly and helpful as Westermarck had promised; and like Westermarck he was sure that, southwards, travel would be easy, though in the mountainous country opposite Gibraltar, among the Andjera tribe to which he belonged, it would be another matter. In spite of the beauty and strangeness of Tangier, I soon got bored and decided to go. Europeans were forbidden to ride more than a few miles from the town, but an Irish upbringing does not make for a strict respect of ordinances. However, while we were preparing, Walter Harris, the *Times* correspondent, heard of it, came to see me with warnings, and, not satisfied with my assurances that I would do nothing rash, went to see the pasha. We started on the morning after Christmas, uncomfortably, in rain, with the prospect of being fetched back by soldiers. An order was, I believe, sent out, but in such a state of government, orders are not promptly transmitted or acted on. A few miles out when I

looked out and saw the Shereef on his horse and the two baggage mules and the odd peaked hoods of their drivers following in a string across the wide country, where we were going hock-deep in mud, I realized the strangeness of it all and longed for Kerry. Ireland was (then) to my mind the one and only place for a holiday. Nor was our first bivouac anyway pleasant ; cold strikes up from wet ground even when you have a camp bed. The next night was more amusing for we brought up at a camp of Westermarck's friends who were said to be robbers by profession. " The Doctor's " name was great among them and I was solemnly presented to their leader, a ragged, burly old ruffian to whom I must offer money. The Shereef indicated the equivalent of a threepenny bit. He then told me that this person claimed to have killed twenty-eight men and wanted a good wish from me. I wished that he might live to do even greater deeds : and then I was hurried along to ford a river before it should rise higher. Later, I learnt that our hosts had urged departure : they would certainly not rob us, but if we sat down for long, other less scrupulous persons might come and do it—and they would get the blame. Our next march took us to the town of Arzila whose walls of ochre-coloured stone shone like a great jewel by the sea—for the sun had come out ; but when we entered the narrow streets they were a foot deep in mud. I was all for camping outside among orange trees and palms, but the Shereef said firmly " No. It is very nice to be inside walls." That was the first indication that his confidence was oozing out. I was taken to interview the Khalifa, a most courteous and affable Moor, who raised no objection to my travelling or to my lodging inside the walls. Later in that year a band of brigands entered Arzila and hanged him in its market place ; I have often wondered if the gentleman to whom I gave threepence was concerned in that.

Next day came fine and I enjoyed the trek ; we passed safely through a defile reputed dangerous. And then—for we were following the coast—a long strand tempted me

out to a gallop, the mules meanwhile continuing on a track inside the sandhills. Presently across the sandhills one muleteer came running; and the Shereef headed back at a gallop, unslinging my borrowed revolver which I had confided to him—and which, after the event, I found that he did not know how to fire. We charged down and found a black-bearded gentleman with a long and highly decorated gun in front of our mules; but on our appearance he explained that anything he had said was only joking; and so we proceeded to the shore of the broad tidal river which flows down from El Ksar to the port of Laraiche. Here, as we waited for a ferry, torrents descended, spoiling the first pleasant day, and we went up the long narrow street that divides the circular enclosure of Laraiche, a dripping company. We went out through the opposite gate, for Laraiche, the Shereef said, was “very fanatical.” and would not allow a European traveller to lodge within its pious walls. On the Sok outside the gates were rows of tents—the road to Fez strikes inland here—and one pitch had just been vacated. The Shereef was for taking it. I sent him to the fondak, saying I would be under a roof, bugs or no bugs, if possible; but I stayed to hold our claim while my macintosh flopped about in the wind and the rain drove in from the Atlantic. The Sok was strewn with dead mules and a couple of discouraged dogs were eating them in the downpour. As I looked on, a Moor from the tent next by came out to open the channel which drained water off his tent, and stirred what I had taken to be an old tree trunk: but it was the decomposing carcass of a camel. I thought of Kerry and the turf fire and the strong tea and the hot scones and the warm slippers that would be before me, even if I did come in wet from such a day, and justly reflected that it would be an hour at least before our tents could be fixed and our kettles boiling. For the fondak had no room for us. Next day, the Shereef put it to me we had better send back our mules and horses overland under escort (procurable because no European would be with them) and take passage by the steamer that

lay in the river ready to sail for Tangier. His reasoning was that, if we went through quick, probably nothing would happen; but since there were no bridges, and when you reached a river you must ford it or wait till you could, the floods might hold us up anywhere, word would go out, we might be stripped of all we had, and, for that matter, I might be kidnapped or held to ransom. Nobody likes to be a European incident: I gave in. We parted with our means of land transport, and the two mules with their packs came down the steep narrow street of Laraiche and after them rode the escort. That Moorish soldier, when he came to our tents over-night to bargain for the price, seemed the handsomest human being I ever looked at; he was so graceful in his white burnous, against which the soft black of a beard and moustache that had never been shorn told admirably; and the sinuous curves of his face, though they were snaky, had infinite charm. He waited on the wharf sitting his long-tailed grey, while after much pulling and hauling and cursing, and endless setting and resetting of planks, our beasts were got aboard the wide barge. Then dismounting, he stepped in and, holding his bridle loosely, signed to the grey. The lovely beast hesitated an instant, then reared a little, stretched out one delicate foreleg, set it down gently; and so foot by foot, quietly yet with the least hint of trepidation, stepped prudently on board and with an enchanting gesture nuzzled up against its master's hand. The group had charm and had romance; and now the ferry boat carried them away from us and the door shut on adventure. I turned back gloomily to the office where a bloated red-whiskered rock scorpion from Gibraltar sold me tickets and introduced me to Captain (let me say) Smithson of (let me say), the *Nabob*.

The captain said he did not know why anybody wanted to travel by sea on the coast of Morocco, for you never knew where you would get to, or when you would get there. After this unreassuring observation he turned and walked gruffly away. He was an insignificant little man, for all his air of authority, and, with his black shore-going clothes and

black flat-topped bowler hat, might have come straight out of a Methodist meeting. I began to inquire then, like the confiding landsman that I was, when the boat would sail. "When the bar gets good." And when was that likely to be? "Allah knows." I ascertained then that the Nabob had been detained for nearly a fortnight in the river; and Captain Smithson had just got an angry letter from his owners in Gibraltar rating him for the delay.

The more we asked the less encouraging it sounded. The bar had been known to stay bad for three months on end. I went up to look at it.

Laraiche, like all these really Moorish towns, is closely walled in, and the wall is no trifle; Portuguese built, it is thirty feet high and twelve or fifteen thick; our tents, after our first night outside, were pitched on top of it, by special privilege, in compliment to the Shereef's sanctity. Outside the wall were only saint-houses, which needed no protection, and the fort, with its old muzzle-loading cannon, having pious Portuguese inscriptions to say they were a guard against the infidel—who had then possessed them some two or three centuries. This sharp division which fenced in that densely-crowded population—no street is more than six feet wide, most of them only three or four—gave one a queer sense of loneliness outside the walls. But what finished the impression that day, was the sight of a steamer lying off just outside, hoping against hope to discharge her cargo. Where she lay, the sea was smooth and gently heaving; but surf ran along the coast, and under us, at the river mouth, where the thick yellow flood poured out into the clear blue, was a muddy turmoil of furious water. That was the bar. Landsman or no, I could see that it was impassable. But the day was wet and blowy, and I assumed that when it stopped blowing, the surf would run down. So, disconsolately, I fared back to our tents.

Next morning it was grey and ugly but windless, and a small boy came running with a message that the *Nabob* would go out. We went down to the wharf, saw steam being

got on her, loaded our tents and baggage on a procession of donkeys, trailed down the steep central street in a deluge and after various maddening delays got on board about noon—thanking God for a dry corner to dump ourselves in. The little wedge-shaped cabin, with long seats on each side of the wedge-shaped table that filled it, was squalid enough ; but it was dry, and we had been under canvas in rain for the worst part of ten days. I went on deck to find out exactly when we should start for our run of, say, fifty miles, to Tangier. Lord, what a different figure Captain Smithson was now. A grubby little man in grubby clothes, he had neither austerity nor authority about him, but was worried, petulant and nervous as a cat. Gradually I made out that he could not go out until the pilot came aboard, bringing authorization from the captain of the port. Flood tide was at half-past one ; there was water enough now, but a breeze was getting up and in five minutes the bar might be bad ; and still no pilot. I gathered that he could go out if he chose, but only at his own risk, which insurance would not cover ; and also that because of the angriness of his employers he was half inclined to risk it.

I say “gathered,” because Captain Smithson, commanding a crew of Levantines with a Portuguese mate, none of whom spoke English, had acquired the habit of modifying English to his conception of a Dago’s understanding. He shouted at them in a lingo, and the less they understood, the more he shouted. I ascertained by experiment that plain English did just as well or better ; but Captain Smithson had ceased to use plain English. “That pilot why he no come out ? No possibilee us go without him give leave ”—that was the sort of thing he snapped at me.

At last, nearing two o’clock, we saw the flag ; a boat came out with it trailing ; but the boat was loaded with people. We soon had the cause of delay. The English consul had fallen deadly ill and there was then no surgeon in Laraiche ; people lived or died “according to the will of God.” A missionary, who had some touch of medicine,

considered that an operation might save the patient if he could be got to Gibraltar; but there was interminable indecision. Finally they came in a crowd: family, friends and servants, the missionary superintending. Moorish servants in their brightly-coloured garments lifted the grey-bearded grey-faced man over the rail, and as he and his following were taken below, we started at last down the river. From where we lay, a little above the town, a rocky projection under the fort hid the bar; but once we saw across it, there was no need to be told that we should be ordered back. We were an hour late; the wind had put up the breakers.

As she moved back to her moorings, the vessel was being converted into a hospital; the Shereef and I, having cleared our kit out of the cabin, settled ourselves in the engine-room, which on that cold blowy January afternoon was the least uncomfortable place: for steam was being kept on her. The moon was full, and it had been decided, for the sake of the invalid, to risk going out by night if the surf ran down. Presently the captain drifted in, aggrieved and disorganized, yet manifestly not liking to complain too much: for not one of us thought the consul would see Gibraltar, or, as the captain put it, any other country but Kingdom come. And Captain Smithson had far too much decency not to be touched by the sight of a countryman bound to die in this outlandish corner for the lack of help that was not a hundred miles away. Certainly, too, he did not grudge his little state-room, in which the sick man had been put to bed. But the missionary had taken possession, without "with your leave" or "by your leave," just as the controller of the port had held up the vessel for a reason that had nothing to do with seamanship. Captain Smithson suffered outrage in his feeling of authority. "I can't find no room on board on my own ship," he grunted. And then he started on his grumble. There was no reason why he should not let fly at the missionary.

"That parson fellow, he savvy nothing, nothing, nothing,

I tell you, absolutely nada. Much more better, consul him stay ashore. Two things no sailorman like aboard—corpse and parson. We going to have two of them.”

Most of this was addressed to the Shereef, with whom Captain Smithson had soon discovered an affinity, and to whom, because he was a Moor, he addressed more scraps of what he took for Spanish, a language which the Shereef did not know. Soon a bottle was produced. With some men it is a short way from whisky to theology. “That parson fellow he get me one Christmas Day to what he call a social gathering. It was a blooming prayer meeting Wanted me to pray, he did. When it come New Year’s Day, I tried the Romans. Better thing. I enjoyed myself much more there. Another little drink?” (this was to me). “No? Well, I will. Shereef, *muios bonos* you take one more glass whisky.” The Shereef consenting (his sanctity was solely hereditary) proceeded to discourse upon Islam and explain how much better that religion was than either Protestant or Catholic Christianity. He expatiated on its conveniences to the ordinary man. The captain listened, with growing agreement, as one small glass succeeded another; but he was staunch in principle. “No, somehow I don’t feel as if I could change my religion,” he said to me. But then uncomfortable thoughts would strike him, and sociability vanished. Keeping up steam cost coal and they were short of coal anyway. Suppose they didn’t get out that night—and it was a poor chance. We went on deck for a look round. The sky had cleared, there was a full moon high in heaven and the pilot was under promise to come on board at midnight. I had heard the captain telling him that he would dash him the best box of cigars he could get in Gibraltar. Then (seizing on an interpreter) “You tell him that, Shereef, a box of cigars *muios bonos* than he ever saw in his life—much more better. If possibilee at all, he let us go out, you tell him.”

There was also the possibility of going out without leave. The captain pressed me to know if I thought he

ought to risk it. I thought only that I wished for a captain who did not ask for advice; and then I turned into a hammock on the bridge—the bed, indeed, in which the sick man had been carried aboard. My mattress was in use below. The last I heard was the captain's voice asking for "one more story to put him to sleep," for the Shereef, leaving argument, had turned to his repertory of folk tales.

At midnight came the pilot—to say "No." I slept again, till in the grey of morning I heard the missionary rousing the captain, from where he slept, curled up in blankets beside the Shereef. The sick man was to be taken ashore.

Dawn was breaking; the whole wide valley which leads to El Ksar was flooded and the first rays through that watery sky gave a whole series of Cuypp pictures: first a deep amber glow, then a cooler yellow, while away west, over the sea, the full moon was setting. But by the time the invalid was ready and the boat alongside, and we watched again that lamentable business of lifting him over the boat's rail—for the decks were piled with cargo—grey pallor was over everything and it was concentrated on the dying face. His wife took her place in the stern beside him, one hand on his shoulder, one laid on his knee; and it was as if she were trying to hold him back.

A few hours later we passed his house in the town; there was a gathering round the door and people's faces told us the end before we actually learned that he was dead. That day continued as it had begun, bright and a windless calm. But when the Shereef and I made our way to the old fort where it juts over the river, the waves below us ramped with the same insensate fury—swelling in, curling over and shattering down. I stood there and cursed the bar as if it were a living creature. If it could be like this with not an air stirring, there seemed no reason why we should ever get out. I cursed the bar and I cursed the people who would so let themselves be submissive to the will of Allah. Slaves to the weather, I thought. Europeans, if they held Laraiche, would dredge the channel or run a pier out—circumvent

Allah and the weather somehow. It was an indignity and outrage to be held up in this fashion. About two years after this began the trouble with the French, and the first blood was spilt over harbour works at Casa Blanca. I can sympathize with the Moors; but that day I felt my solidarity with Europe and my revolt against Africa.

Presently, I learnt the reason of this apparently unreasonable commotion of the waters. Somewhere in the North Atlantic it blew or had been blowing, and far down this coast the recoil of water was flung. That was the explanation given by an old Moor who sat out here watching the river. He had been till recently the captain of the port, the Shereef told me, a man who knew the bar as no one else knew it. But merchants complained that he would not take risks, that their vessels lay idle outside while he forbade the lighters to go out. So a new man was appointed in his place; and thirty Moors out of two lighters were drowned in one day.

He had nothing cheerful to say to us. "You missed your chance yesterday." "When?" in answer to our question—"Allah knows. Perhaps in a week." Nevertheless the delay looked impossible. The day was so calm, the sun so strong, it seemed certain we should only have one tide more to wait. Even to-day, the sea might possibly run down. High as it was, it was not so high that I could afford to go for a walk; there might come a change in the afternoon and the *Nabob* slip out—without us.

No change came. That afternoon we went aboard again, and established ourselves as best we could in the cabin. I was not sorry to be there anyhow, and out of my tents. Companionship is a queer thing. The Shereef was good company for a while; he had an amusing point of view and long association with "the Doctor" had made him aware of what would interest a European by its unlikeness to European notions. His English was quite good enough to exchange ideas in; I have made friends with Germans, Danes, and other such people whose tongue I could not speak and who spoke mine no better than this Moor. But after

a week of it, one found that no real exchange of ideas was possible ; the Mohammedan mind was too unlike ours ; and I pined for European society. The captain was that, anyhow ; and he had seen as much as should have made him first-class company to pass an evening with ; yet somehow he had not the gift of conversation. Beyond a few Rabelaisian details upon costume and personal decoration in West Africa (and these related without gaiety) all I could get out of him was a general contempt for " natives " and a general conviction that Britannia really did rule the waves, with an emphasis on what a third-class cruiser could do to Laraiche and all similar seaports in five minutes. He was arrogant, and he was insignificant ; and I kept on wondering how on earth he commanded this odd muddle of half a dozen men with whom he had only the most partial communication by language. All the same, there was something about him that had an appeal. Some sick dogs are a nuisance ; others make you want to look after them. Although he was the gloomiest company, and even exasperating to be with, I found myself forgetting my personal worry over delay and adopting his, till I might have been his nurse ; and I listened with growing patience (helped by the fact that practice made him speak English like a Christian) to his lamentations over all that was on his nerves ; the death, and the bad luck that was sure to go with it ; the delays, and the trouble he would have with owners about them. We turned in early, but I heard him go on deck about two ; I heard also what took him there—the sound of the rising bar. He came back in a minute.

" I may tell you," he said, " that we have no more chance of crossing that bar to-morrow than of going to heaven."

That was only the beginning. He went back into his little stateroom that opened off the cabin ; the Portuguese mate and the Shereef extended on the long bunk opposite me snored in unison, while for the rest of the small hours I lay tossing and listening to groans from the skipper's cabin. At last about dawn I heard him get up—I supposed,

for one more nip of whisky—but then came unmistakable sounds of stropping a razor. I was on my feet in a moment. Nothing in heaven or earth seemed more unlikely than that he should be wanting to shave. “Put down that thing,” I said. He obeyed like a child; then without any question what I meant or why I meant it, he began to explain. There was a nurse in the town, he said, attached to the Mission. “She’s a good woman. I’ll go and see her. It’ll do me good to have a talk with her.” I consented to this and settled down again. But after the shaving, confused movings and searchings still proceeded from the cabin. “What is it now?” I asked. “I’m looking for my shore-going clothes,” he said, “and I can’t find them. There’s clothes here, but they’re not mine.” It was another touch of the grim grotesque that ran through all this business. In the hurry of moving the sick man, they had put on him the first garments that came to hand—and they were the captain’s “Are they good clothes?” said I. “Will they fit?”

“It’s not the clothes I mind,” he said, “it’s the manifest of the ship’s cargo that’s in my pocket.”

Well, of course that was serious. Still, as I pointed out, nobody was going to steal such a document and we could easily get it when we went ashore. For I also had an errand. Word had come off in the previous afternoon requesting that I should act as chief mourner at the consul’s funeral—should, in fact, represent the British Empire—I, a pro-Boer Irish Nationalist. I tried to impress on the captain that he, as the local embodiment of wave-ruling Britannia, ought to take it on; but he shook like a guilty thing at the bare notion. And, heaven knows, even shaven, and even in his sea-going clothes, which suited him much better than the missing ones, he was not a handsome figure-head just then: too tremulous with whisky. Besides, I had an odd sort of piety constraining me against my scruples. This consul was a waif and stray from Derry, a city known to me all my life; he was a Derry Protestant, and I knew what that meant; and he had married out here in this outlandish

place an Italian or Spanish lady, and begotten a family of what Derry would call Papists ; and none of them were going to come to the funeral. In Ireland we fuss a good deal about buryings, and the most black-mouthed Protestant would pay his last tribute to a Catholic neighbour, and the greenest Catholic would do as much for an Orangeman. Not for the sake of the Empire, but for Derry Walls, I decided to be chief mourner ; and the captain said that was the decent thing to do.

So we made ready for the shore. Two Portuguese sailors got out the boat and though we were only a few hundred yards from the wharf, they stepped the mast, put a big lateen sail on her, and Lord ! how she went ! The stream must have been coming down a good six miles an hour, and we had that and the breeze. In about half a minute we were off the wharf, they let go the sail, spun her round like a top, and she came alongside ; a fraction of a second sooner and she'd have rammed it full. Wonderful boatmen ! The captain and I made our way then to the house of mourning and inquired after the clothes. But they were too busy mourning there to care about manifests. The captain went then to pay his devoirs to the nurse ; the Shereef and I went back to the centre of the town and watched the funeral assembling. It was then that we ran against Carlton. Whatever English-speaking Europeans were in the place had gathered together, and Carlton was native English, though he probably spoke Moorish more naturally. He asked me to go out shooting that day after the funeral was over, but I said if I was to be chief mourner I had better behave as such. For the whole town was ceremonially marking its respect to the dead ; there was angry talk about the family. The family's objection, it seemed, was to the parson. If Carlton would have read the service, they were willing to come. These niceties of theology seemed a little disgusting.

Gradually, under the grey sky and driving rain the assembly mustered. The Pasha and all the town notables,

tall and dignified Moors in flowing raiment, came escorting the cortège. I took my place behind the coffin and we reached the burial-ground, where it was my office to hold an umbrella over the bare head of the Methodist divine as he read a form of prayers, with passages interpolated to guard against any suspicion that he was praying for the soul of the dead: another theological nicety. I can see still the handsome animal face of a young Jew boy, shovel in hand, watching like a dog to discover when the incomprehensible show would be over and the shovelling begin. It ended and he fell to lustily. Morocco is the only country where Jews do all the hard menial labour—down to grave-digging. Then we dispersed lugubriously, and the Shereef and I, having gone up the town to buy some things, turned into a little Moorish café, much haunted by the holy man of the city who two days beforehand denounced me there with spittle falling on his beard epileptically. Still, we had become reconciled; and the place was empty now, except for him, squatted in his usual spot. But he gave us no recognition, and even refused to exchange the customary greetings with my Shereef. He was mourning for the consul, he said; and why was I not mourning? I thought myself lucky to be able to say that I had refused an invitation to shoot; then, gradually, he thawed, relented, and proposed that I should settle down and become the new consul in Laraiche. When I explained that I had other ties, he said he would go down and shout to the bar for me that it might be good; he told me what to drink and what not to drink that we might be lucky, and after one or two little observances we departed, a little more cheerful after a pleasant episode.

But when I rejoined the captain—whom the Shereef unerringly tracked to the only place in Laraiche where a European drink could be got—he was neither cheerful nor sober. Carlton was there with him, indulging a devilish kind of graveyard humour. He had all but absolutely persuaded the unfortunate skipper that the consul had been buried in the missing clothes. We were appealed to at once.

Wasn't it true that Latin people always buried a man in black? I put up a fight, for the captain's face was a study in misery, and told Carlton that if so, he would certainly be buried in dress clothes and the coat with the manifest in it must be safe.

"Yes," said Carlton, "but what about the trousers. They were black, weren't they? Who'd go to strip the trousers off a corpse to put on a new pair? No, I tell you, captain, manifest or no manifest, your trousers have had the burial service read over them! And I wouldn't like it for myself. I wouldn't like to have my trousers in someone else's grave."

And then the Shereef was launched. He had about as much humanity as a schoolboy, and the captain's visage tempted him. Those years had not been spent with an ethnologist for nothing, and he recounted rapidly all the uses to which magic was accustomed to put a purloined garment. Even a handkerchief would do, if it had been carried for a day by the victim. But trousers! He went into details emphasizing how intimate a garment this was. "And there were prayers read over these. That is magic. That parson told what is in them to rot, and it will rot; and it is a part of you that is in them, captain."

"Yes," said Carlton, "and there's no delay about it in this country. Things rot quick. If I was you, captain, I'd make my will."

The captain poohpoohed it. He didn't give a damn about the trousers. What he wanted was the manifest. But he wriggled in his seat, all the same. "It's a darned ugly thing to have happen," he said, "I admit that." And he poured out another glass of gin with the shakiest of hands.

Then enter a boy, bearing on his arm a black bundle. The captain sprang on him, like a famished beast. Coat was there, trousers were there, and from the pocket came out a bulky document. The fashion of the captain's countenance was changed. No, he wouldn't have another drink. He

was going to get aboard and see things ship-shape : I asked no better.

The boat and two Portuguese sailors were waiting. It was blowing very strong now, and again they hoisted the big lateen. The sail was nearly taken out of their hands as they shook it out, and in the flurry the captain's hat went overboard and drifted away to leeward. "It's a dollar," he said ; "I won't let it go." So we put her after it, picked it up, and again began to hoist the sail. But the wind had taken us far out in the flood water, and while the men were struggling to fix the hook of the tackle to the spar, the wind in the half-furled canvas drove her scooting, and there was a sharp bump. She bounded off, but next moment a stream of water told us what had happened. She had hit the fluke of an old anchor and knocked a handsome hole in her bottom and the water spouted in. It was down sail then and pull your best for the wharf while the skipper and I sat with our legs on the gunwale. She just made it. We helped to haul her up, investigated the damage. Whether it was the recovery of the trousers or the little touch of danger—for almost any swimmer would have been sucked in under the timbers of the wharf—the captain was a new man. In two minutes, with the recovered dollar hat well back on his head, and a hammer in his hand, he was busy and cheery, covering the hole with a sheet of lead. News spreads quick and before his job was half done a boy came running from Carlton to see if it was true we were all drowned ; if not, would I come up and spend the night ? I accepted gladly, as we were ready to start early in the morning for a shoot unless the bar ran down—and it didn't ; and I spent the next day tramping for woodcock that we did not see and snipe that I missed ; then, tramping back past acres of orange groves all golden in the sun, we put up partridge and neither had his gun ready ; so we poked about looking for the rest of the covey under laden orange trees where the ground was thick with violets and white narcissus. I brought back nothing but oranges to the ship that evening, but I brought my

welcome. Wait till you have eaten sun-warmed mandarins at Laraiche.

The Shereef and the captain were in the best of fettle and delighted with each other. It was maddening enough to see the bar running high as ever under the sun in a dead calm ; but the captain said he had decided to think no more about it, and so did I.

Next day I landed and went again to the look-out station ; there were breakers still, less fierce, but I had learnt how quick they would get up, and the tide was at five that day ; if it failed, we should have two days of dark tides when we could not get out, even with smooth water. I lunched with the hospitable Carltons, and found them none too reassuring. Still, steam was being got on the *Nabob* and boats were coming and going. About three I went out to her. If the deck had been full before, now it was overflowing, and on the bridge stood and chatted a whole army of Mecca pilgrims, some fifty of them. A caravan had just come in, it seemed, and our delay was their luck. But most of them had been robbed on the way. Then at half-past three the pilot came aboard. He would say nothing certain, and presently to my despair he rowed off. The captain's anguish was even greater ; he hailed him in his wildest lingo, but the Moor, dignified in his blue and white robes, took no notice, and went quietly on his way. We had an anxious hour then ; but at last we saw the flag and moved down. Breakers showed again over the spit, and in the very river the pilot stopped us for a last load : crates of eggs, each some four feet each way. The boat was slowed down, the lighter grappled to her, and in frantic haste the crates were swung aloft and deposited in the single spot on deck where I had found clear footing. Then the captain let her go and with the lighter still grappled to her, she started down the channel. I can still see the poise of one of the boatmen—a splendid fair-haired fellow who might have been a sun-bronzed Swede, erect on the bows, one hand tightly grasping the tow rope. They cast off from us opposite to the wharf, and then came

impassioned shouts from the agent on shore bidding the captain stop for three more passengers. I said to him: "Don't stop for your mother," and he answered grimly, "I wouldn't." So it happened that an American millionaire on his way down from Fez with the Sultan's escort had to go home overland.

Heaven knows there was enough on that boat already, apart from any chances of big waves getting bigger. On the bridge the captain and the man at the wheel were using their elbows vigorously to clear a little space around them, while the *Nabob* was going out. We steamed close in now under the fort (and here the pilot dropped off in his boat); then right out on the bar itself, abreast of the league-long line of rollers which happily here in the river channel were not actually breaking. Very slowly, going heavy with her freight, like a woman far gone, she swam out, sidled up and over the first roller, the second, the third, the fourth, and I heard the man at the wheel say, "Full speed now, captain," as he spun the helm over to slant her down the slope of the last. But the captain gave no sign. He was perfectly silent now and steady; in charge, a seaman at his job. Still going slow, she ducked over the next, and the next, and then came the one he was waiting for, and had seen coming—a great mound of green water. Very slowly she rose almost to the top, then I saw it fall in on her and I saw the man in the bows run to lee of the rail. I started to do the same, thinking to get behind the wind awning, but I had counted without the Shereef, who seized me in a strong grip and held me where I was, while a mass of the wave toppled clean over us. It seems he thought I was going to fall overboard and was surprised to find my gratitude so small as I ran down to change my drenched garments; then ran up again to rejoice with the captain. He had still the accent of authority, but no jubilant air. "I wish to God I was round Cape Spartel." "What's the matter?" said I, "Fifty miles to run and a fine evening." "Look at her," said he. I could see only that her paddle was three parts under water.

But presently, as she began to go with a queer kick like a lame horse, and a slight list to one side grew accentuated, there was no doubt at all that if even a light wind rose we should be much safer ashore. Also, we had barely enough coal to do it in a calm ; I'd forgotten that ; but it sat heavy on the captain. The fifty pilgrims were strewn in heaps, almost to a man sea-sick and all deadily nervous, for they had never been on the sea before. We tried to shift them to the port side to ease the list, but it was like moving sheep. After dark, it grew cool and I thought to leave the bridge. But the cargo on deck was flush with the rail ; she rolled a lot and the least that could happen to me would be to step heavily on several prostrate and possibly resentful Moors. The captain added that if I went overboard he wouldn't stay to pick me up.

" If it comes to blow in the least, something must go over Cargo or pilgrims. I think I'll take the pilgrims." He was very grim and cross all through the chilly hours as we squattered like a winged bird along the coast. At last we entered the strait, swung into the harbour and anchored for the night, since we could not get pratique till the morning. Then on the bridge the captain blew out a great breath of relief : " Never again," he said ; and I realized a little of what it means to be in command of a vessel that isn't seaworthy. However, the tension was off ; we went below to the cabin, had a square meal and mild drinks and the captain talked about his wife and kids somewhere in the East End. He hadn't mentioned them before, but I fancy they were on his mind a good deal in his fear of being sacked. Well, if he came late this trip he made up for it in cargo ; I doubt if the *Nabob* ever earned so much before or since on a passage.

We got pratique in the morning and I went ashore to pick up my letters and see people, who kept me busy with talk ; but before noon I ran across the captain in the street—sober as a judge, spick and span in his shore-going clothes. I stopped and grinned " Those the trousers, captain ? "

"The very ones. And a damned sight better on me than on that old fellow. I'm not for the churchyard yet."

That was twenty years ago. And, if I haven't got to the churchyard, why should he? Good luck to him wherever he is. My head muleteer said, when we paid them off: "Everything passes away, but only kindness remains." So at least the Shereef translated him. I wish I may have stayed in Captain's Smithson's mind half so kindly as he in mine.

I was sent for to the British Legation and got the reprimand from Sir Arthur Nicolson that I richly deserved: but he was friendly. So too was Mr. Walter Harris, who forgave my disregard of his advice and asked me to lunch in his beautiful house, at the end of the long miles of strand which curve round the Bay of Tangier to outliers of the mountain mass. There in his garden was a broad walk a hundred yards long all planted with flowery thyme and alyssum, which smelt divinely underfoot as we trod it, among the bees so busy in the sunlight. But the best thing I got out of my extra ten days at Tangier was a friendship with the painter Henry Bishop—one of Westermarck's allies. He had come first to Morocco for a day's excursion from Gibraltar and had stayed twelve years, catching, with delicate elusive art all the subtleties of African colour where the Western, all but European, climate subdues what is garish in Algiers to a shimmering loveliness. Years later I saw him in London, very unhappy: stress of circumstances had forced him back to where he might do something saleable—for this adorable work of his found little market. He had a show of it, but nothing was selling. One afternoon by appointment I went round to his studio and found vacancy; but there was a note to say that the dramatist Somerset Maugham had come into his show and bought almost everything: Bishop was off to Morocco by the first boat he could catch. I hope this will be remembered to Maugham at the Day of Judgment.

I have few possessions and most of these few are pictures: and I would almost rather part with my big Paul Henry than

Bishop's study of the walled town of Tetuan on a day of heat haze—a melancholy picture but unspeakably delightful in its many whitenesses, and almost imperceptible pinks and blues—soft yet solid as the colour of some sun-bleached shell.

When I got back to London, Westermarck's work had to be wrestled with, and I pity from my heart anyone who has to revise the text of such a thinker. Every word had been weighed: and sometimes the run of words was not English, though there was no grammatical inaccuracy. It was easy to substitute an equivalent but not easy to convince that scrupulous mind of exact identity in the meaning. Above all I came out of the ordeal with intimate conviction that I knew no rules of punctuation. I would put, say, a colon in place of a semi-colon: and then he asked firmly to explain why I did. Even my use of commas proved to be entirely temperamental. I am not convinced of sin or even levity by these interviews: but I did carry from them the sense of how solid, and carefully compacted is the work of a first-rate scientific mind, applying itself to philosophy.

In that summer it was settled that we should leave London and migrate to Ireland. Over and above my strong feeling that children should, if possible, have a country upbringing, special reasons weighed. One of them was the fact that my wife had decided to enter the Roman Catholic Church. Our children were too young to form a view, but I thought it better that they should go with the one of their parents in whose life religion played an important part. Questions of schooling had arisen and I interviewed a leading English Jesuit—explaining to him that I had neither opinions for or against the truth of Christianity, in any of its forms, but found that after much trial my mind remained wholly unresponsive. It meant no more to me than music did: but I was fully aware that other minds found infinite beauty and meaning in one as in the other. He said that this was the case with many people, and was very polite, and neither

condemned nor condoled. No man of the world could have made things easier. Then I went to another Jesuit house, this time in Ireland; and the Rector of Clongowes was a charming simple old man, like the kindest type of parish priest. It seemed simply impossible to enter on such explanations as had come so natural to me in the other place, and I said, "The truth is, Father B., I'm afraid I'm a very bad Christian." "Ah, now, Mr. Gwynn," said he, "don't be too hard on yourself." That, I think, settled me to send the oldest boy to Clongowes: that, and what it implied. If they were going to be Catholics, they had better grow up in a country where it was normally and naturally the religion of the country.

I have never regretted the decision that I then had to take on behalf of my children. And it seems to me well to set down, for those who like myself are not and never will be Roman Catholics, what my experience has been in more than twenty years of working and living very closely with people of that religion. I have never been conscious at any point that their standpoint on any question of honour and conduct differed from that of any other honourable men whom I have known. The most devout of all in the practices of his religion was Willy Redmond; yet he as a Parnellite had been violently in collision with his own clergy—and though I have no doubt he regretted the conflict, most certainly he never wavered in the belief that he had taken the right course. If all considerations but simple honour had to be set aside, I would as soon have taken his judgment as that of any man I ever knew—even though it involved making allowance for the fact that the persons involved were not Catholics. And if I had to choose a man to represent the finest qualities that the British Army produces in its officers—charm, courtesy, unselfishness, unfailing allegiance to duty, good comradeship and good sportsmanship—I would have called for a friend of my later years, Michael Sweetman, who, when I knew him at his home in County Wexford used to walk across the hill to Mass, a

mile away, every morning before breakfast—and never say a word about his religion.

I write this because I would not have it believed that I made my children less free than I am. In so far as they have taken bonds on themselves—one is a Jesuit priest and one is a nun—they have limited their freedom, by my consent, which, in my son's case, was given unwillingly; but it is a strange notion of liberty that will forbid such an exercise of freedom. I would as soon have forbidden them to marry.

Another influence which moved me towards Ireland was the prospect of taking service in the Irish Party. That is, I think, a fair way to put it. Ever since I was on my own, it seemed to me that there was need of trained men for this work, and that I should probably take a hand in it sooner or later. Marriage and the rest made this for long impossible to me; and I might probably never have moved at all about it but for a friend's casual observation. Arthur Elliot, then editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, was an old member of the House of Commons: he had been Financial Secretary. I had done a great deal of work for the *Edinburgh* under his editorship and had come to see a good deal of him—as who would not that had the chance? One day, talking about politics, he said that he had seen every section of the House change completely, with one exception: the Irish Party was exactly what he had always known it. No new man had appeared, and all the old had remained. Whether he drew the conclusion or not, I cannot remember: but I at least inferred that there was a loss of efficiency.

In one respect Elliot was wrong. Devlin had already become a member, and Devlin was the one important recruit that the Party received from 1900 onwards. But he was a force in Ireland long years before the House of Commons knew anything about him: and his effect in the House was never comparable to his effect in Ireland.

With this reservation, the leading persons were the same as the death of Parnell left them: and they had now come

together. They had joined in opposition to the Boer War; the national organization had received, under the impulse of Mr. William O'Brien, a new name and new energy as the United Irish League; and in 1900 fusion had been effected, by a curious arrangement. The Anti-Parnellites held nine-tenths of the seats: their official leader was Mr. Dillon, then very closely allied to Mr. O'Brien; but he was subject to some opposition from Mr. Healy. Agreement was made between Mr. Healy and Mr. O'Brien to make Redmond, leader of the eight or nine Parnellites, chairman of the united party.

During the Boer War the Liberal Party found itself divided: the Irish, numbering eighty-five, were solid and very effectively led and Redmond rapidly advanced the position both of himself and of his Party. But he was always more conciliator than a fighter, and in 1902 he, with Mr. William O'Brien, entered the conference with Lord Dunraven and other leading Irish landlords which resulted in the recommendation of a scheme for buying out the whole landlord interest. In 1903 this policy was adopted by Mr. Wyndham, and everybody embraced everybody else—except a small nucleus of what are now called Diehards.

What determined me to write and offer my services if they were wanted was, however, not the Irish situation but my own. The thing was more possible than it had been, in a money sense. Also, I thought it would not be difficult to combine my writing work with attendance at the House of Commons. Other people had done it—"T.P." and Justin McCarthy most notably. I little knew the facts. Justin McCarthy wrecked his health and eyesight; "T.P.'s" amazing facility carried him through, but his constitution must have been still more amazing. No outsider can guess the strain involved by his double rôle.

I went by appointment to see Redmond in the room set apart for him in one of the lower passages of the House. He was as usual very guarded, and said it was entirely a matter for the local Conventions—as it was. All that he

could do was let my disposition be known in places where a vacancy was probable.

As a matter of fact, this would be done rather by John Dillon, who was far more effectively in touch with the organization in Ireland, for Redmond confined himself to his duties as chairman of the Party at Westminster.

I had already met John Dillon in London at the house of his wife's father, Sir James Mathew. Lord Justice Mathew had been a contemporary of my father at Trinity College. He was a Catholic, the favourite nephew of Father Mathew: and it was Father Mathew who had settled that the clever boy, already trained at a Protestant school in Cork should go to what was a definitely Protestant University. No cleric was ever less afraid of free association between Christians of different denominations than the apostle of temperance, who constantly reminded the world that he had been launched on his mission by the Quakers. I think that I first met these beloved friends of mine in Ireland when they had taken "Bellevue," the La Touches' beautiful house near Greystones—with its Angelica Kauffman paintings and all the noble work of the Irish Georgian period. At all events, wherever and whenever we met, I and mine were made welcome in the most pleasantly hospitable house that I ever knew in London. Dinner parties were an agreeable feature of those days, far more common than now, and there you dined admirably in the best of company: J. M. Barrie often, still more often Augustine Birrell—whom I had met first when we sat side by side at one of the *Cornhill* dinners. I remember from that far-off evening Alfred Graves beginning to celebrate the achievement of a very Irishman and calling it a wonderful career. "I would sooner slice ham all my days in a cookshop," said Birrell, and I delighted in the rich, full-bodied phrase—not foreseeing how many troubles would come to that same wit from his joy in the phrase that makes a picture, and from his inability to refrain from using it. I met other men there with whom I was afterwards to have some association—James Bryce the historian and

politician, square and lean and tough, half Scot, half Ulsterman, with a good heart, immense industry and knowledge, and no saving grace of humour. It is easier to speak of these people by the names they were first and best known by ; so I say that there also I met "Antony Patrick," Sir Antony MacDonnell, then at the height of his fame ; the Indian pro-consul who had been fetched back to govern his own country, and who held that if he had been able to manage forty million Pathans he should be able to cope with four million Irishmen. Dillon, who knew something of the question, thought that this was not so certain ; but at that time Dillon and he had not yet come into collision. Sir Antony had put the Land Purchase scheme through ; yet even on that it would be too much to say that there was no collision, and Dillon precisely was the rock he hit. I remember his square jaw, and forehead projecting over the deep-set eyes and his whole look of imperious mastery even as he sat talking over a cup of tea to Lady Mathew and myself—describing with vivid phrases a certain militant priest in the West—and not too well pleased when I put the name to his subject. Twenty years later, my last meeting with him was in the same company : many illnesses and the wastage of age had blurred all the fierce lines and relaxed the harsh strong chords of his voice : but the will to authority was there : I am sure to the last hour of his life he never relaxed his effort to get public things done according to his counsel. He had been beaten in his life's work ; the four million Irish had shaken off his grip : but he never let go of the attempt to regain it, yet not for any mean motive. He was of those who really loved Ireland, in his own masterful way.

But it is of the Mathew household itself, and not of its guests that I really desire to set down my memories : for nowhere else in my life have I seen more of the beauty of happiness. Sir James Mathew and his wife had married young with nothing to trust to but his brains ; and their prosperity never looked back. There is assuredly some continuing influence in such a life as Father Mathew's—

for if ever a saint lived it was he, and throughout a life that went through perhaps the most awful of modern tragedies—the Irish famine—and came out of it broken, he remained like the man in Goldsmith, “a great lover of happy faces.” Sorrow and bereavement were not spared to the household of his favourite nephew, but were never allowed to quench the good sunshine: the head of the house died, long ago, long before the Great War; yet one can come there and find, as I found the other day, one dear to so many of us, sitting in a room decorated like a *prima donna*’s with flowers, because it was the opening of her ninetieth year, and ready as ever to say: “My dear, I know I ought to be wishing for my end and the happiness of the next world: but really this life has been so very pleasant that I cannot help hoping it will go on a little longer.”

I met Dillon for the first time in that house, probably in 1903, and was anxious to meet him, because my mind had become set on this project of Parliament; and then as always I found him the easiest person in the world to talk with—the readiest to bring his mind in contact with other persons. It took me some years to realize the stupendous difficulty of inducing by such contact Dillon’s mind to alter by one hair’s breadth. But I remember vividly one afternoon, when Mrs. Dillon was there and Sir James and I had been discoursing to her about the sharp antagonism between Dillon and Sir Horace Plunkett—and the excellent reasons for modifying it. At last Lady Mathew broke in: “Now, Monsieur” (so she always called him) “you and Mr. Gwynn have been talking very nicely and very wisely and you think you have made an impression upon Bessy: I can tell you that whatever you have said or may say, Bessy’s mind will be the same. She will think what John Dillon thinks.”

It was quite true. Yet I have never known anyone who less abdicated her own self. So far as things political were concerned, she was the advocate of Dillon’s view—and an advocate who inherited the talent of a great advocate. But she brought with her wherever she went her own gaiety,

courage, and a personality whose force was felt as well as its charm: and no one who lived within her influence could fail to be affected by it. While she lived the Dillons' house in North Great George Street (one of the noble old eighteenth-century streets, even then sinking fast into a slum) was one of the pleasantest centres in Dublin.

CHAPTER X

ENTRY ON IRISH POLITICS

A CONSIDERABLE time passed before we were established as Dubliners. In 1903 we had spent the summer holidays in Donegal, mostly at Dunfanaghy on Sheephaven Bay. There we had come to know the people about Portnablah, the little harbour—and especially the household of Mrs. Mullen. Nobody who knew that house would want to stay anywhere else, and dozens must have cursed us, for we monopolized I think her whole available space from June, 1904, till late autumn.

There had been originally, when she married, a thatched cottage with a farm about it, standing on the hummocky ground which fronts Sheephaven with a ridge of cliffs, thirty or forty feet high in places and running up to three or four hundred just beyond the boundary of the Mullens' sheep grazing. Across the bay lies the peninsula or island of Horn Head whose seaward face is nine hundred feet sheer. It makes some shelter to the north-west and from the west hilly land screened us; but due seaward there was only a low line of upland, crowned with a cairn of stones for a sea-mark; from there you looked away over limitless blue water. The short crisp grass on these uplands, the black cliffs, wrack-fringed, and haunted by the innumerable sea birds that breed on Horn Head, the ocean fitting into the curved bay like a cup of purple—and over all, the broad wings of the wind, sometimes off the sea, sometimes off the big

peaked mountain chain that stretches west along the coast—all these give the beauty of that place a largeness and a tonic quality that nothing else in all I know of Ireland quite matches.

And over the hill behind us lay all the miles of wooding which front on to the inner water of Sheephaven: Ards Woods, and nearer us the smaller wood behind Marble Hill where Hugh Law, then member for this part of the county, had his beautiful home. His father, Lord Chancellor for Ireland in the days of Mr. Gladstone's Land Act, had begun life in Donegal. Law himself was not Donegal bred: but his wife, daughter of my father's first curate, had run over these hills from her childhood: not many men could keep pace with her on them. These charming and cultivated people were a great addition to our life: but the folk who mattered most to us were those we lived with. These longshore Donegal people, part fishermen, part farmers, have the sturdiness of what is specially called Ulster with the charm that is everywhere in our West: and I never knew anyone to question but that the household we stayed in held the very best of the type. It is more than thirty years since we first entered that house and the friendships we made have been interrupted by long lapses of time; but when I went back there a year ago with my daughter, it was as if we came to our near kindred.

I went on ahead of my family in May, 1904, and within a few days was urgently summoned to a Gaelic Féis at Cushendal in the heart of the Glens of Antrim.

The invitation came from a well-known Belfast antiquary, F. J. Bigger. In the previous summer he had turned up at Dunfanaghy with three or four lads in his company—one of them being Herbert Hughes the musician, already in quest of Irish popular airs. There was a semi-Gaelic entertainment in the courthouse with Irish songs and dances and it was attended by all and sundry—to the surprise of these Belfast folk. I said that Donegal was in Ulster, but that we had always lived friendly together, and preferred

it so. Herbert Hughes spoke up: "I don't know but I would sooner have a place where a man is liable to have stones clodded at him for his opinions." That was Belfast all over—especially Belfast of the minority.

However, in 1904 an attempt was made to accomplish in Antrim what came so easy in Donegal. Antrim is the most Protestant of all Ulster counties; but the Glens, running down to the sea from Larne away north to Ballycastle are in the main Gaelic and Catholic: even remnants of the Gaelic speech lingered there among very old people.

The gathering was typical of what the Gaelic League then aimed to be—but also of the potentialities it held. There was an exhibition of local industries, of singing and dancing; there were recitations in English—and there was very little Gaelic. I spent most of the day raking out old native speakers and trying to persuade them to come and be judged for their proficiency. All whom I met had long disused the tongue. Horace Plunkett presided and made the speech before prize distribution; it was the first time I ever saw him on a public platform, and since I have been told a score of times that my own oratory closely resembles his, there is no harm in saying he had all the hesitancy and the incoherence of a thoroughly bad speaker. But he had also what no one could mistake: courtesy, will to his end and a winning goodness, as well as wise and noble instincts. It was a tribute to him that the attendance there included Sir Daniel Dickson, one of the greater linen potentates, a rough, hard Orangeman, but, as so many of them were and are, a lover of all that is characteristic of Ireland. Possibly he remembered how one trumpet of the North, the Reverend Dr. Kane (known to Ulster as "Roaring Kane") had joined the Gaelic League, saying that he might be a Protestant and an Orangeman but did not wish to forget that he was an O'Cahan.

One of the chief organizers of this friendly festival was Miss Ada McNeill, a near kinswoman of the present Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. The whole affair was a little

unusual in North-East Ulster, but was otherwise very much like what a Gaelic League Féis would have been, say, in County Wicklow. There was at this time great insistence on the non-political nature of the movement.

Yet I met that day for the first time two men whose names are heavily underscored in modern Irish history : both have the mark that is set by a death sentence, though, happily in one case it was not carried out. Both were glensmen, one a Protestant, one a Catholic ; and it was the Protestant who suffered the extreme penalty.

I need not write here at length about Eoin MacNeill, then already famous as a scholar and Vice-President of the Gaelic League, in whose foundation he had taken as much part as Douglas Hyde, though he lacked altogether Hyde's extraordinary power to advance its growth by personal appeal. He was one of a family of clever sons, brought up in Glenarm, southernmost of the Glens ; all had the examination-passing gift : one, now High Commissioner for the Free State in London, had entered the Indian Civil. Eoin MacNeill was then employed as a Civil Service Clerk in the Four Courts. His name began to be widely known in the autumn of 1913, when he launched the first appeal for an Irish Volunteer Force—answering to the Ulster body. Since then, to sketch the events in which he has taken part would be to write a history of Ireland. But in 1904 he was not known outside the Gaelic League and the much narrower circle of Irish scholars.

It was far otherwise with Roger Casement—though his Report on the Congo had not yet attained the immense publicity which it received when it made the solid platform for an attack which swept the Congo Free State out of being. In that bitter campaign, no weapon was left unused on either side and if it had been possible to smirch Casement's name, by any means, it would have been blackened. Yet he came out from all that propaganda and counter-propaganda famous through Europe, and carrying such prestige that he was the inevitable choice for a similar mission of inquiry

into the methods of rubber collecting in the Amazon basin. His Report on the Putumayo region carried the most damning authority. Few reputations showed brighter than his, when in 1912 he retired from the Consular Service with a knighthood.

My interest in African affairs had slackened since Mary Kingsley's death ; but meeting Casement had extraordinary interest for me. Yet what remains now in my mind is chiefly the impression of his personal charm and beauty. It was a superb day in June and most of us were staying at the hotel in that attractive little village by the tideway of the river : he was lodged elsewhere, and came strolling down after dinner, in evening clothes but with a loose coat of grey Irish frieze thrown over them and a straw hat crowning his dark, handsome face with its pointed black beard. Figure and face, he seemed to me then one of the finest-looking creatures I had ever seen ; and his countenance had charm and distinction and a high chivalry. Knight errant he was ; clear-sighted, cool-headed, knowing as well as any that ever lived how to strengthen his case by temperate statement, yet always charged with passion.

Nothing in this life has surprised me more than the tragic evolution of his career. I did not approve the course by which Eoin MacNeill incurred sentence of death in 1916 for organizing rebellion ; but it never perplexed me that MacNeill should have done so. But I have never been able to understand the duality of Casement's position. That he should work in the British Consular Service to end an abominable wrong in the Congo, and later on the Putumayo River, did not commit him to any enthusiasm for British rule in Ireland. But even in 1904 he was, I am credibly told, engaged in propaganda against recruiting for the British Army, while still a civil servant ; and in 1912 as a member of the Civil Service he accepted an honour from the Government which—in so far as it was the Government of Ireland—he was even then planning to overthrow.

I do not know how he reconciled the two facets of his

career. But having said that, I say none the less that Roger Casement still seems to me one of those who in my time did real and conspicuous service to humanity, and seems also one of the most noble creatures I have known.

No fair mind can deny that the British Government was fully entitled to execute him or that many men in authority could have felt it their inevitable duty to carry out that sentence. But the meanest thing I have known to be done by the tools of a Government was the private circulation of statements about his sexual morality, which were calculated to offset the widespread public feeling that it was wrong to hang such a man. No surer way of obtaining the widest publicity of scandal could have been adopted; not even though it had been proved in open court that the alleged offences had been committed in a London park.

When I got back from Cushendal to Portnablah, my family had arrived and were flinging themselves voluptuously into the joy of doing whatever was done by the slightly older boys and girls of the household. I have a clear vision of my younger daughter, now Mother Mary Xavier, mistress of studies at Mayfield (the very excellent school kept by her Order in a lovely Sussex village). Memory shows her with her knees tied up in newspaper covered by old sacking, and proceeding on her knees along the drill of turnips which she was zealously thinning. My eldest boy was no doubt down at the harbour, or along the rocks, trying to catch fish of some kind. At low tide, when one knew the holes, a little scrambling could produce a dozen or so fine crabs. Later, in autumn, came the herring fishing of which Downings Bay (one nook of Sheephaven) is a great centre.

Preparations for it brought Green round in the *Granuaile*, and he took me off for a cruise, which ended at Galway. Nobody else known to me saw that city first from the sea. Romantic it is at all times; but to come to Galway by water and see all those huge buildings of black limestone—really a marble—gives the oddest sense of strangeness. There at least the Spanish influence remains; though of all the great

houses built in continental fashion, round a court entered by a great *porte-cochère*, not one remains. The place fascinated me ; but I never guessed that I was to be associated with it as its Member for twelve years—till it ceased at last to be a separate constituency.

In the late autumn of 1904 my wife, by the death of her mother, came into a considerable fortune, and so we were able to project our establishment to our liking. Choice fell on a house at Raheny in the plain of Fingal (half-way between Dublin and Howth) ; trains and trams made access to town very easy, but we were in full country surrounded by big grass-fields, covered in winter by flocks of plover and curlew ; and on the little stream which ran at the bottom of our garden I saw at various times snipe, woodcock, teal and even kingfishers (though indeed I have never in my life seen kingfishers except near some considerable town or village).

The house was a characteristic piece of Georgian work externally, a plain red brick structure with no grace of design. But when we had gone through it with Richard Orpen, who advised an architect, we counted up the bedrooms and found apparently one short ; then the thing explained itself : the builders had sacrificed a room to give the drawing-room its coved ceiling.

On this room, the Georgian decorative art had been given full play. Our library and dining-room on the ground floor were well-proportioned rooms, but nothing more : but on the first floor they had constructed this beautiful apartment, with one tall window looking south-east over green field to Dublin Bay, and two tall windows looking south-west across the garden to the Dublin mountains. The room was an octagon inscribed in an oval, so that the angles of the octagon were barely noticeable ; and overhead the coved ceiling rose in a series of ovals filled with plaster work of the best : a goat nibbling vine leaves was the chief theme. The mantelpiece was a charming example of the Scagliola work inlaid in white marble. And by a curious caprice

the garden wall springing from each end of the house echoed the drawing-room's design in a great oval.

How fine the tradition of art was in Dublin under the territorial oligarchy which reached its prime in the days of Grattan many people know; but it struck Hugh Thomson all of a heap when he came in to us that summer. Belfast has many virtues and many beauties but they are not architectural; and Hugh had never before been in Ireland south of the Boyne. He went about raving over the beauty of the fanlights which crown the entrance to so many tenement dwellings in our slum quarters—those noble degraded streets on the north bank of the Liffey. He has fixed also his impression of the two superb monuments of that time which our generation lightheartedly destroyed: his drawings of the Customs House and the Four Courts show them as they were before our war left them in ruins. These were illustrations for the book on which I was then engaged—or rather the two books, because the scheme ran beyond the limits of one volume. But *The Fair Hills of Ireland* and *The Famous Cities of Ireland* are parts of one work, and though the first was published in 1906 and the second in 1915, Thomson's work was all done at the earlier period.

The Fair Hills helped to launch an enterprise which has produced good results. We were being very "Irish Ireland" in those days, trying to encourage home industries by voluntary effort; and I did not see why Dublin should not be a publishing centre. So I got Hodges & Figgis, the well-known booksellers, to bring out for me a collection of Irish essays and my tiny book of Irish verse. But when I consulted the Macmillans' head man, my friend S. R. Hutt, he poohed and pshawed mightily over the sample of work submitted; and proceeded to explain that everything was wrong from the spacing of the page to the frequent insertion of dots and lines that were better away. A busy bookseller cannot effectively run a publishing business, and I was delighted when I heard that J. M. Hone wanted to start one. I had met him at Cambridge on one of the first of many visits that I have paid

to both Universities, invited to discourse to groups of young Irishmen ; and somehow it fell out that I was able to bring him into touch with George Roberts, then known to me as one of the Irish players. The result was the firm Maunsel & Company. I agreed to publish the *Fair Hills* through them at my risk.

So far as its make-up was concerned, author and artist were Irish ; my cousin Eily Monsell did the cover, a very admirable application of Celtic design ; but the printing went across the water. Yet a few years later Maunsel & Company were able to bring out the Irish printed edition of Synge's works, which was as finely produced a book as man could desire. To-day there is plenty of publishing done in Dublin, and plenty of books are produced pleasant to look at and handle ; a good deal of English printing work comes now to our people ; and for this great improvement, the credit is due to George Roberts for his skilled direction of printers. As a publisher, he has not given so much satisfaction to the world of authors.

One of the attractions of Raheny to us was that it neighboured Clontarf, the suburb to which my father and mother had moved their abode before 1900. Ashbrook, when they got it, was an ugly house standing in a field with some shrubs in front ; within a year, my mother had made a very good garden of it : few people went from it without an armful of flowers, and there were vegetables and fruits in due season. My father's chief care was the provision of new shrubs and the joy of his heart a plum-coloured passion flower which he got by chance. That and a profusion of other climbing things soon covered the ugly front with beauty.

In the spring of 1905 while work was proceeding in the house at Raheny, I took the children up to Portnablah again, leaving my wife to superintend operations. That June I got a letter from my father to say that Sir Charles Ball had decided he must be operated on for calculus and other complications. Only the three eldest of us were so far to

be told. He explained the arrangements and went on: "All looks well, but neither I nor any of you ought to close our eyes to the possibilities (not to use a stronger word) of such an operation at my time of life (seventy-seven). . . . Don't let this letter interfere with your plans in any way, but hope for the best and be cheerful about it, as I am."

I went up, of course, and found him in the nursing home, undergoing the usual twenty-four hour preparation. The bed was strewn with papers, and he began instantly to talk about what occupied his mind. His chief work was the great edition of the *Book of Armagh* which Dr. Reeves had begun more than half a century before this and had not finished. The accumulation of forty years' notes on it came to my father for completion. Lying there by himself, my father had placidly continued to think over various problems, and the solution of one had just presented itself. He showed the dovetailing together of three passages which, so brought into relation, settled beyond all doubt a point concerning St. Patrick's missionary journeys. It was as definite as the putting together of a Chinese puzzle. Having communicated to me his satisfaction in this, he went on to explain the arrangements for cutting him open. I was admitted to see him the day after the operation, and found him rather white, more fragile than ever in appearance, but correcting proofs. Nor was I his first visitor: he had already interviewed one of his divinity students—the young man in whose progress he was for the time chiefly engrossed.

When we took up our abode at Raheny my mother had found us a gardener, who confirmed my opinion that a good and clever Irishman, country bred, is the best sort of man that anybody can have to work for him. He was very good at his own special job; but every good gardener has his individual preferences. Callary kept us lavishly supplied with flowers, but his main talent was for vegetables. We had green peas as early as anybody else, but we had them in succession till October. Later on in my life, when I ran a garden, this seemed a simple thing to manage; but it

defeated me hopelessly. Callary could repair a greenhouse, he could slate a roof ; he was told to run an acetylene plant and ran it ; there was an old and battered ram that supplied water from the stream for garden use and was obsolete and inefficient ; but he used to keep it working. His commonest observation, when a job was proposed was, " Sure any man could do that has hands on him." We took to farming in a small way (there were ten Irish acres with the place). He was very skilful with cattle, and knew something about horses, though he had no taste for them. Indeed his parents in County Meath had first designed to make him a jockey : but God provided him with stout, fleshy thighs that were never meant for such a career—and his parents accepted the will of Providence. But the main excellence of such a man as I am writing of is that when he accepts to serve you, your interests are his interests : you can go or stay, things go on the same. I learnt that before we came to live in the place. He had been put into the lodge with his wife and family and given another man to help in straightening up a garden derelict for over a year. I came to see how the work of the house was going, and the contractor as we went round stopped at a window. " Where did you get those men ? " said he. " Why ? " said I. " Because," said he, " there is no one looking after them, but whenever I see them, there they are with their heads down and their tails up, working like niggers." He was wrong about there being no one in charge ; Callary was.

I had occasion later to find how he construed his trust. He came to me one day to say he was sorry he must give me notice. When I asked the reason it was that he would not stay on with the other man whom we then employed. He was teaching Callary's children bad language. I knew that he meant more than he said and later found out that there had been other matters. He could not work with a man whom he suspected of dishonesty. We replaced that man (who had a gift with horses and a most amusing tongue), and next time we chose well. When it came to our leaving,

Callary went on my recommendation to a convent school outside Dublin; and as soon as he was engaged, pointed out to the Mother Superior the advantage of taking on this other worker whom he knew. There they are still, the pair of them, after sixteen years; and the convent and the farm and the garden are Callary's property, just as was our place. He and the Reverend Mother divide the responsibility and when I call upon him he insists that my respects shall be paid to her also. I hope he would have given me the same credit for common sense as he allows to her. But he made me into quite a passable spade labourer.

It amazed me to find that this Meath man had had an Irish-speaking father—bred somewhere near Trim. Callary himself remembered a few phrases, as we discovered at once. For, of course, in our Gaelic Leaguering zeal we tried to get Irish speakers about us. Green found us a boy from Kerry to help Callary; but the difficulty was to get an Irish-speaking governess for the children. The lady we found, Miss O'Toole though she had helped in a national school at first, later went to New York and was accountant in a big hotel. Naturally enough, all our friends said we had got a barmaid to teach our family. But of the various governesses who entered into their lives, none has stayed a friend except this very able Connemara woman, who these many years has been back in her native West. Our experience of those days threw some light on the assertion that Irish is not one language but many dialects. Miss O'Toole and the Kerry boy could talk Irish to each other without the least difficulty, but for at least a month the Kerry boy could hold no communication with our Donegal maid who spoke English as it is spoken in Ulster. She also, like him, had never before left her own mountains. When we first came down with her to a temporary abode before moving in, screams of delight arose from the scullery where she had been sent to work. "Miss Sheila! Miss Sheila! Glory be to God, the water's running hot out of the tap."

That recalls the one crab to the house We had put in

a second bathroom without reflecting that this district was very short of water ; and as a result of our innovations we were brought to a state when the cook came running to my wife. "What will I do, ma'am ? There isn't as much water in the house as would baptize a fairy, and me with the potatoes to put down for dinner."

One of the privileges of inhabiting that neighbourhood was that we came to know one neighbour, Miss Jane Barlow, an Irish authoress now most undeservedly overlooked. Her *Irish Idylls*, which by their title acknowledge a debt to J. M. Barrie's Irish book, were none the less original and moving work : and the volume which followed, *Strangers at Lisconnel*, was even better. She put her studies of peasant life away somewhere in a Western setting : but in truth they were based mostly on her knowledge of the country folk about Raheny—among whom she was quietly beneficent. She was in outward aspect a shy little mouse of a lady, her fair hair faded, and even her blue eyes less brilliant than one might have expected : but there was a fierce spirit inside her, and it came out in her when she turned to verse. One day in London Reginald Smith of Smith & Elder who were her publishers, showed me a letter which he had received about her volume *Ghost Bereft*, and turning back the signature asked me to guess the writer. It was the wildest laudation : Dickens came in, to be set aside as inferior in pathos : the poems *Three Throws and Pure* might have been by Victor Hugo, but he never achieved such concentration. And so on. The signature to the letter was A. C. Swinburne. And although Swinburne had always a vehemence of expression, I do not think that he ever liked indifferent work.

Miss Barlow's existence was wrapped up in that of her strange old father, one of the senior Fellows of Trinity : perhaps the nearest equivalent to Mark Pattison that Dublin University produced. Somewhere in the early sixties—when theologians were very sensitive—one of his sermons appeared to be unduly rationalist ; there were protests

from within and without the academic circle, and he was debarred from preaching in college. After this, he was a man with a grievance, and shut up his powerful talents within himself. But, by the slow course of nature, he mounted the ladder of college promotion and in the early years of this century had become Vice-Provost. On Dr. Salmon's death there was a great struggle for the Provostship. Dr. Mahaffy was by far the most widely known scholar in the institution and he had powerful backers—but there was a strong party against him because he had favoured the scheme of attaching a Catholic College to the Protestant one, within the same university. The present Provost, Dr Bernard, a much junior Fellow, already had backers: but the choice fell on Dr Anthony Traill, one of the Senior Fellows. Friendships were strong in this body of seven elders—the youngest of whom at this period must have been close on seventy; but enmities were strong and unconcealed; so far as report could convey, at their meetings they tore each other like dragons in the primeval slime. Dr. Barlow was a good hater, and he hated Traill—a man of great shrewdness but little intellectual distinction. Whether it was the report of the appointment that made Dr Barlow take to his bed or no, I am not sure; but in bed he was and in bed he remained when it was his duty as Vice-Provost to swear in the new Provost Traill and the Board had to come out to Raheny, where the grim old man—I picture him in a grey night-shirt—read out from the Statutes the official Latin formulary of introduction: then, slamming the book together, he added, in good English, “And may the Lord forgive me for what I am doing.” Traill, who was more than a little deaf, pressed to the bedside and shook him warmly by the hand. “Thank you, thank you, my dear fellow”; then turning to the others, “I didn't quite catch what he said, but I suppose it was something civil.”

Another of our pleasant acquaintances was Canon Hayes the rector of Raheny: a good botanist, a great gardener, and a delightful human being. He took me firmly in hand

about church-going (for I occasionally accompanied my wife and children to their Catholic devotions) saying, what was true, that people in Ireland expected you to be one thing or the other and that if I went anywhere I should come to my own church. So I went in future, if anywhere, to the very pretty little edifice which Lord Ardilaun had erected on his grounds at St. Anne's; and the next thing I knew was that I had been appointed a select vestryman. I never grasped the duties of the office beyond that now and then one was called upon to go round with a collecting bag. Time, no doubt, would have revealed more functions; but when I became a Nationalist Member of Parliament I found that, as quietly and unobtrusively as I was chosen to the church office, so quietly and unobtrusively I was dropped. The posts were plainly held to be incompatible and I "lifted" the threepenny bits no more. But I was a select vestryman once. And Canon Hayes, no longer rector of Raheny, but still riding a bicycle through Dublin streets in the late eighties of his life, is still, I am glad to say, one of my indulgent friends

That autumn in October or November, 1905, I received a letter from the parish priest of Carrigaholt, Monsignor Glynn, asking if I would consider standing for West Clare at the coming general election, and if so would I come down to talk it over

The journey from Limerick on through Ennis and so to Kilrush gave me plenty of time to think; and a drive of several miles on a sharp autumn evening brought me very cold to Father Glynn's door. I found a big, tall, upstanding, masterful man, evidently accustomed to command, but full of the hospitality which is a pleasant characteristic of his Order. We dined at once, for Irish priests always dine early in the afternoon: at five o'clock I had probably kept my host an hour behind his usual hour; and after dinner we drank very admirable punch. For Irish priests when they are not teetotallers preserve the punch habit, which in

my boyhood was general. My father, for instance, in our Donegal days used to take his tumbler as a matter of routine of an evening ; but since I was twenty I have scarcely seen punch except in a priest's house.

If you are to drink whisky, that is the pleasantest way by far to drink it—especially of a cold night. But Father Glynn's standard of what punch should be was high. A full glass of whisky, of course, and not a small glass ; but his custom (and I presume that of all the priesthood in Clare) was to add to the first glass that supplement which has many names in Ireland. Sometimes it is called the *sharrach* (the calf thrown in with the cow) ; but his name for it was Biblical—a *Teigeen*, that is, " a little Timothy." This name carried an allusion to St. Paul's exhortation about using a little wine for the stomach's sake.

Monsignor Glynn had as good whisky as can be got and he used it with discretion and appreciation, as the traditional Oxford scholar uses his port

I do not want this book to be a dissertation upon Irish politics ; but it may help to understand if I say something about the Irish priesthood and the position which they occupied when Ireland was not self-governing.

It dates from O'Connell's time. He found the Catholic Irish a swarming peasantry without leaders. During the century of the penal laws virtually all the nobility and gentry who remained Catholic had emigrated, if only to seek a country where they could have social standing. The most interesting conversion that I know of in the eighteenth century is that of a Taaffe, who became Protestant in order that he might fight a duel—no Catholic having the right to wear a sword.

O'Connell assumed the leadership of his people, but he wanted lieutenants—local leaders : and he found them ready to his hand in the priests. In every parish there was at least one man of superior education.

In 1848 the priests refused to be drawn into the physical force movement : in the sixties they denounced the Fenians

Then when the Land War came, combining action in Parliament with what was virtually a trade union of the peasantry—having for its weapon that form of strike which is known as the boycott, combined with withholding of rents—they joined in, not universally, but in many cases with great fervour.

It was indeed impossible that the Irish priests should not take their part in a land war, so far as Christianity permitted. Ireland is an agricultural country and they came from the people who were tenants of the soil. Each man lived and worked in the diocese in which he was born ; the local fight of the Land War touched the homes they came from.

It is curious to reflect that in the Ireland of those days there were two classes sharply marked off—the priests and the police. By Irish custom every priest must serve in the region of his upbringing. The apprehension that a poor man's son might be disregarded because of the poverty of his origin was set aside : so was the possibility that he might use his influence unfairly, might job for his relatives (and some of them did job). These things were not allowed to weigh against the advantage of the utmost intimacy of relationship. On the other hand, by British regulation, no policeman must serve in the county from which he came ; it was a rule founded on suspicion : and such a rule always tends to perpetuate the grounds on which it is based. England does not so legislate about its own policemen. But the policy which England established for Ireland has been maintained even now that Ireland has its own Civic Guard. We have learned to distrust, and, no doubt, have grounds for distrusting.

The other policy of trust has, I am very sure, served Ireland ; and the Irish people are content and have good right to be content with their priesthood—as priests. For the other functions which politics imposed, the results were less good. From 1890 onwards the Irish Catholic clergy had more influence than any other body of men in choosing representatives for the Irish people, and on the whole

they did not use it successfully. The rule was simply to find somebody who would pass muster and not to discontent local ambitions. Monsignor Glynn, when he looked about to find a man likely to be of service for the work that had to be done, was exceptional.

The General Election came in December 1905, and a Convention was announced to be held in Kilrush for the selection of a candidate. These Conventions consisted of representatives from all branches of the United Irish League in the constituency; of delegates from the County Council and from District Councils; of representatives of the Irish National Foresters and Ancient Order of Hibernians if they had branches in the constituency; and lastly of all clergy—which in practice meant all the priests. I never heard of a Protestant divine who used his right to attend—though had one done so, he would have got a great reception.

I went down a couple of days ahead and made my first experience of canvassing—in a very limited way—under local direction. It is a disgusting job and ought to be forbidden by law. Yet I keep one memory which lights up Clare for me pleasantly. We came about dark to a good-sized farm: for Clare is not poverty-stricken like the west of Mayo and Galway; it is limestone land and there are plenty of solid substantial farmers. I entered and the man of the house greeted me in Gaelic. "For," he said, "I hear you have the Irish." He showed us into a big kitchen with a fine great hearth blazing. All round the walls were settles, and ten or a dozen people sitting on them with that quietness of Irish peasants which the Abbey Players have made familiar, and which is so little stolid. There were the usual appurtenances, a big dresser filled with crockery and so forth; but what was new to me was a long deal table set out in the middle of the room with a row of candles on it, and on each side six or seven children busy at their lessons. "Is that your burden?" said I in Irish. "A share of them," said he. And then I began to see. Nightly, the parents and children of a neighbourhood came together of an evening and the

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children did their preparation for next day's school under the eye of the grown-ups—who meanwhile chatted quietly on their settles. It was a beautiful sight : the long, low room had fine proportions, its whitewash was clean clear colour against which the muffled figures showed ; but there was an air of the home that was not only a home but a centre, which was rare and happy. In such homes the " poor scholar " of last century used to earn their keep by directing and helping such parties of learners, children of the well-to-do Munster farmers to whom these travellers came from starved lands and meagre cabins in Ulster and Connaught.

There was too a parlour, into which I was shown (for the inevitable offer of refreshment) with dark handsome furniture, probably of price ; and in the whole house not a thing tawdry or vulgar.

As Kilrush had no accommodation, we all stayed in Ennis—candidates, their backers, and Willy Redmond with that good comrade his wife whom I met there for the first time. Redmond was representing the National Directory.

In what came to be a large experience, I never knew such a corps of competitors. Seven of us—and one at least a very able man, Barry O'Brien. He, however, had not appeared ; and the local men were of course at their own homes. But there was a doctor from Liverpool who had arrived in top hat, frock coat and spats, all singularly out of place in that atmosphere. Very different from him was his brother, a Clare priest who had been most prominent in the land war : the pride of his life was that he had been one of those " named by Persico "—an envoy from the Pope who in the 'eighties came over to inquire into the Irish proceedings and reported adversely on the conduct of certain persons. This priest was a big powerful man, looking as if he would be formidable with his fists and not slow to use them : and he made an onslaught on me. I was " too cultured for Clare." How would I like to stand up and have porridge thrown at me ? I admitted that I should dislike it, but except by glanc-

ing towards his elegant brother, refrained from saying that others might dislike it even more. Some years later when we met again, I was in a position to remind this priest of his observation, for many things had been thrown at me : (I often wondered whether my patron saint had anything to do with it). He admitted, very candidly, that I was not so cultured as he had thought.

The Convention was due to begin at twelve o'clock, so I presume that it started about half-past one. Monsignor Glynn was in the chair. Each candidate was proposed and seconded in a speech and then made his own speech. Everybody was proposed by a priest (most of us also seconded by one) except James Halpin, Chairman of the County Council, and he was the successful candidate. Proceedings drew out. The hall (I think a courthouse) was packed tight, and nobody had very closely examined the right of people to be there. Crowds as a rule check my flow of sympathy and I have always hated making a speech to ask votes for myself ; thank God, it very seldom had to be done. So they heard a very uninspiring address when it came to my turn. (There was indeed no speaker among us : Barry O'Brien, had he come in person, might have carried that meeting.) But somebody shouted at me from the back, " Could you shoulder a rifle ? " I said only one man there had the right to talk about rifles and that was Halpin (for he had been a Fenian), but that anyhow rifles were discarded, and I refused to discuss the prospect of having anything to do with them.

We went on and on with speeches till it became apparent that night was closing ; and there was no means of lighting the place. Father Glynn speeded things up and then we were confronted with the difficulty of taking a vote among seven competitors. It was agreed to rule out some by show of hands, and four of us were left in. After the first count, somebody came over to me and told me I was leading by a long way. I do not know what my face expressed : but my feeling was exactly : " I'm in for it."

One man was struck out, and a new division taken : and

then it came down to Halpin and me. The grounds of choice were more than a little comic. From the standpoint of County Clare, I was desirable because I was the grandson of William Smith O'Brien, the rebel of 1848; and even more desirable because I was the lineal representative of Brian Boru, King of Thomond, who defeated the Danes and made himself King of all Ireland. That happened A.D. 1002; but my two days' canvass taught me that Clare which is Thomond was far more interested in Brian than in Smith O'Brien.

On the other hand, Halpin had actually been concerned in a rebellion (though never actually "out"); and what was more, he had defeated Lord Inchiquin, head of the family descended from Brian Boru, for the chairmanship of the County Council. Since I personally did not come into the matter, it was a choice between the live dog and the dead lion; and they chose the live animal: a decent, stout, strong farmer, no use in the world for the work at Westminster, but an honest Nationalist whom I came to know and like.

The final absurdity was that I should be set up as representing the O'Brien tradition, while not only Lord Inchiquin but every one of Smith O'Brien's sons was vehemently Unionist, and would have done their best to keep me out.

Providence, which has not always been kind to me, spared me a good deal that time; for the representation of Clare was not a bed of roses. Willy Redmond told me as much that day, and all later experience confirmed it. Cattle thrive well on limestone soil, but in the West of Ireland so does crime. There has always been more violence and outrage in County Clare and South Galway which borders on it than in all of the granite districts, Kerry, Connemara, Mayo and Donegal put together.

There was, of course, no election contest. Conventions were held to avoid these. A year or two after, Halpin died, and Arthur Lynch was chosen to replace him: an irresistible candidate since he combined great intellectual distinction with a rebel record—having fought on the side of the Boers, and incurred sentence of death, commuted to imprisonment

I doubt if there was any contest at all in 1906 in Munster, Leinster or Connaught, except in South Dublin where Bryan Cooper, who is now perhaps the most popular private member in Dail Eireann (the Free State House of Commons) won the seat as Unionist.

But in Ulster things were very different, and after the first plunge in County Clare I was sent off by the League to join the forces arrayed for the struggle in East Tyrone. This seat had been continuously held by the Nationalists: but the majorities were never excessive. They ranged from five to five and twenty, on a poll of several thousands.

In 1885, when the Irish electorate was almost doubled, a surprise attack by the Nationalists captured Northern positions that could not be maintained. Protestant Ulster's first impulse had been to rely on quite other weapons than votes; but these demonstrations were quelled; and Protestant Ulster, resolute that no more graveyards should be polled, sat grimly down to the business of registration. So did Catholic Ulster. There were no chivalries. Each side would use any advantage that it could gain, fair or unfair, but each side worked under the abiding fear of election petitions. The essential, as each side realized, was to get every possible voter on the register first and afterwards to the polling booth. Ninety-nine per cent. of the Catholics and ninety-eight per cent. of the Protestants approximately could be relied upon to vote for their natural hereditary side. I think I am right in saying that the percentage of "rotten Protestants" (it was the term always employed) was appreciably greater than that of backsliding Catholics—who might be known as "shoneens," "MacNallys," "Judases," or simply as "traitors." The faculty of independent judgment is more cultivated among Protestants.

In such a state of affairs, the personality of a candidate mattered little—unless the balance was very fine indeed. But it was extraordinarily fine in East Tyrone. I was twice engaged there as a speaker within a few months. The first time our candidate was Mr. Duggan, an ex-school teacher,

elderly, quiet, with very little to say, and no voice to say it with. The second time we had T. M. Kettle, the most brilliant speaker of his day and a young man of perfectly irresistible charm. Duggan got in by seven votes, Kettle by sixteen. Yet I do not believe in my heart that the difference was due to Kettle's eloquence. If in that constituency he turned three votes out of the eight thousand it was little less than a miracle.

After one of these occasions when I got back to Dublin, some politician came up, shook me warmly by the hand and congratulated me on my "splendid work." I, in my heart (being very young at it) thought that my speech-making must have made some sensation after all; but modestly said I had seen no sign of it. My friend looked at me open-mouthed. "Why," said he, "I heard you stopped a man from voting." And sure enough, some stray person back from abroad whom I met at a purely non-political gathering had asked if this Kettle was really such an awful ruffian, and I had said he was not the kind of man to vote against anyhow; and my advice was taken.

But two things stand out from my first experience of working with the Irish Party. The general election was in mid-winter, we were going out, a brake load of us, for a tour of meetings and I inquired if there was an hotel in (I think) Stewartstown; and what I heard sent me back for a sandwich. As I came back with it, one of the other orators looked at me: "There's a good deal of the Englishman attaching to you," he said. Always in an Irish election there was too much to drink and too little to eat: I was very glad of my sandwich later, that snowy day. But when we finished up, I was left in an hotel at Coalisland with two members of that wild lot, the Irish Party. One was Duggan, the other Mr. Jeremiah Jordan, whose name nobody could be unaware of. These two elders were well known in the little hotel and got a great welcome—and assurance that all was waiting for them as usual. So it was: warm slippers by the fire, and hot barley water. Both were teetotallers, Jordan a Methodist shopkeeper

from Enniskillen. We spent the evening discussing the poetry of Oliver Goldsmith—of which old Duggan had a great knowledge and appreciation

However, they were not all like that. But in the main the Irish Party which under Parnell had been a collection of young men was now elderly, and its rank and file had little sympathy with the new movements which were manifesting themselves

CHAPTER XI

ELECTION TO PARLIAMENT

ANYBODY who wishes to re-constitute the political conditions in Ireland at the time when I was definitely entering Irish politics would do well to look at a very clever *roman à clef* which appeared in 1905. This was the *Seething Pot*, first of a long list of novels which have been signed George A. Birmingham. By 1906 we all knew that this was the pen name assumed by J. O. Hannay, then Rector of Westport in County Mayo. But the book was a puzzle to me when it came at its first appearance with a type-written enclosure, apologizing to me for liberties taken with my family history. The book opened with a sketch in which Smith O'Brien's career was attributed to an imaginary Mr. Geoghegan, and the central figure of the story was his son, a young man of the landlord class, surrounded by Unionist friends and relatives, but having the heritage of a rebel tradition. To re-read is to be reminded what elements were then seething in the pot of Irish life. This was the period of Mr. George Moore's incursion into Irish interests and he figures recognizably. So, but much more sympathetically, does Standish James O'Grady, an admirable writer whose work is little known outside Ireland. Parnell was revived, but oddly mixed up with Mr. William O'Brien, who in those days lived in a cottage outside Westport.

George Birmingham, inventing fictitious occurrences, had been admirably exact in his description of places ;

and naturally Westport's was the first society in which the authorship was clearly divined. Already while newspapers were attributing the book to various persons (not infrequently to me) the parish priest of Westport and some other persons in the town construed it into a personal attack on them. The result was a considerable trouble in the Gaelic League. For Canon Hannay, as Canon Hannay, had interested himself keenly in the Language revival, and, since very few of the Irish Protestant clergy were doing the same, was held in high esteem by the League as a whole. I saw this friend of mine for the first time at one of the League's annual Conventions, the Ard-Fhéis, which he attended as a delegate from the Westport branch ; and I rather think that the first words I heard George A. Birmingham utter were uttered in Irish. If so, they were very badly uttered. To hear myself speaking Gaelic is to know how Anglo-Irish I am ; and Hannay was if possible more lacking in the chords and palatal arrangements which a good tongue of Irish demands. In the West, or in Cork, it is not easy to be sure what language is being spoken by any group of countrymen ; but Hannay's speech, like mine, betrayed him for an Anglo-Irishman.

We met and had a good deal of talk, and not long after I was precipitated into a somewhat amusing quarrel. A local Féis was being held, somewhere in Mayo, and the principal person concerned was Canon Macken, a very able priest who was also a finished master of Irish. Now, at this moment the Catholic clergy as a body were in no way over-friendly to the new movement. They were orthodox by nature and by training ; and in politics, orthodoxy was the old-fashioned Nationalism of the Irish Party. The politically orthodox disliked any movement which professed to be national, and at the same time non-political. Parish priest and Protestant rector got on perfectly well together, gyrating in their respective orbits, so long as each orbit remained the same. But a parish priest was perplexed and annoyed when a Protestant divine began to pay attentions to the National language and set its spiritual importance even higher than

orthodox Nationalists were prepared to rate it. The Irish are a suspicious people ; and when it became clear that the Protestant divine was also under a pseudonym writing very sharp criticism of the Catholic clergy, trouble broke out. It was made plain that if Canon Hannay took a leading part in the proposed Féis, the parish priest and his friends would denounce the whole

This put Canon Macken in an awkward position. As a Gaelic Leaguer, he approved of Canon Hannay ; but he was a personal ally of the offended priest, and thought that his friend had cause to be angry. So, upon consideration, did I. On the other hand, the Gaelic League, being a vigorous new movement, was very intolerant of clerical interference. The result was seen at a meeting of the League's Standing Committee (the *Coisde Gnótha*) to which I had been elected. What the precise cause was, I forget ; but the Catholics present were almost as one man desirous to censure Canon Macken, whom I, the one Protestant, was defending.

My view was then, as it has been always, that when a writer mixes fact with fiction, he should be even more careful than the historian lest an individual should be unfairly represented. If you describe in a novel an actual town you must be prepared to find that the identification of real with imaginary persons will be carried even further than is intended. I did not think that Hannay had intended the priest in his book to be identified with the parish priest of Westport ; but it was not surprising that the parish priest and his parishioners should think so. And I said too, that Hannay had written things after which he must naturally expect the fiercest resentment. I quoted this passage :

“ The Irish priests have schemed and lied, have blustered and bullied, have levied taxes beyond belief upon the poorest of the poor ; but they have taught the people a religion which penetrates their lives, and which in its essential features is not far from the essential Spirit of Christ. Such religion is not to be taught by word. The man who represents it must first understand it and possess it in his own soul.”

After the discussion, I naturally pledged myself to write to Hannay what I had said ; and I got back the angriest kind of letter ; for in mentioning this quotation I had only transcribed the part which would give offence. This, he said, was the worst of all forms of slander. However, I put it to him, first that I had read the whole passage ; but secondly, that if anybody said of me that I had schemed, lied, blustered, bullied and fleeced the poor, I should not be in the least gratified, though he called me *au demeurant le meilleur garçon du monde*. On consideration, Hannay agreed that there might be something in this. But still, people with sharp pen-points often have very sensitive skins.

There were always quarrels in the Gaelic League ; it was infested by a cantankerous spirit—from which two men were specially exempt : Douglas Hyde, to begin with, but not less, Patrick Pearse, who was then editor of the League's official organ, *An Claidheamh Soluis*.

Very few persons have left a more definite mark on history ; of the three among my friends who suffered execution, he is the only one for whom it can be claimed that his purpose was accomplished. And yet, though spiritually Pearse may be regarded as the founder of Irish independence, I am uncertain whether if he had lived he would have accepted the Free State. My reason for doubting is, that he was half an Englishman.

That talent for compromise which makes the Englishman so successful, seems under certain conditions in Ireland to harden into a fanaticism of the strict logical ideal. Erskine Childers was, I think, more responsible than any other man for the Republican resistance to the Irish Treaty ; and he was half English. And, in a less serious instance, the only example I have known of a Gaelic Leaguer who stoutly refused to speak English was Mr. Claude Chavasse. They were quite right to make this Englishman President of the League for reviving our National language. In default of Irish, he will speak French ; and in the extreme cases where

business must be done through English, he speaks his sentences first in Irish and then under protest translates them. In this fashion he negotiated with my secretary about the lease of a house; but my original proposal had been, by me and my daughter, studiously written in Gaelic—and so I got the preference over another bidder (and a Gaelic Leaguer, at that), who omitted this precaution.

I suppose that Pearse was a fanatic; but I met no suggestion of it in my dealings with him. He was a man of about thirty; with a handsome head, cruelly disfigured by a cast in one eye. He was at that time a simple but not eloquent and passionate speaker, and in all that he said or wrote, the spirit of courtesy and of fair play was conspicuous. He wrote very well in English and in that language I am sure that all his political thought shaped itself; but in some of his Irish songs and his little plays there was a quality that I have only found elsewhere in those of Douglas Hyde—a simplicity and tenderness and melody which even my uninstructedness could perceive.

I liked him thoroughly and unreservedly, and when he set up his Gaelic-speaking school I sent my youngest sons there, believing that contact with such an idealist was as good a thing as could happen to them. Heaven knows how far I was from guessing at the issue to come from that schooling for some of his pupils. Looking back on it now, it seems clear to me that Pearse, just because he was only partially Irish, was more strongly affected than most Irishmen by the European War.

Emulation, as between nation and nation, went to his head, pushed him into action. But in all the history of mysticism, is there any more singular instance of supernatural foresight than that which was shown by this quiet unassuming young man at Easter, 1916? They would go out, they would be crushed, they would be denounced, they would die; and their blood would change the whole outlook and temper of Ireland; it would breed armed men. They could count with certainty on England to alienate by punishment, and

with certainty on Ireland to swing to their side. Cynicism is plenty in Ireland; suppose a cynic had been consulted on the mystic's forecast, what sport he would have made of it! Nobody has ever done more than Pearse to show how much clearer the mystic's vision is than that of the ordinary decent man. But that he should have got men to follow him into that desperate adventure is to me a marvel, for in the days when I knew him, he had none of the challenging magnetic quality. There was then no suggestion of the leader in him.

Sinn Féin as a political force did not count for much in 1906. It held nothing of importance but the personality and pen of Arthur Griffith. These, however, were very far from negligible, and the influence of both was widely felt in the Gaelic League. Everybody knew that when the Gaelic League started to have politics—as it must some day—they would be Sinn Féin politics, unless the Parliamentary party changed its attitude—one of distrust. Hyde wrote to me in 1901:

“The United Irish League is, I fear, not friendly to us, and though we control Dublin, they control the country.”

It was, however, an over-statement even in 1901 to say that the Gaelic League controlled Dublin; and up to 1906, the United Irish League gathered strength, and could apparently afford to neglect Sinn Féin. There was, however, anxiety in a different direction. In 1904 after Land Purchase, Mr. Wyndham was popular as no Chief Secretary had been in living memory. But Mr. Wyndham was acting under the Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour, whose primary object was to lessen the power of the Irish Party at Westminster. This could be done in two ways: either by splitting the organization of a pledge-bound group of members, or by legislation to reduce the number of Irish representatives. The second plan was not attempted until the first had failed.

The story of the attempt to create a new middle party

in Ireland does not belong to my memoirs, except to this extent: I received a letter while my home was still in London, asking me to become Secretary of the Irish Reform Association. The writer's name escapes my memory, but my refusal was based explicitly on the ground that I was a Home Ruler in the ordinary sense: and I mention this simply because Mr. O'Brien in one of his books of memoirs says, in unwitting error, that I abandoned Lord Dunraven. My first meeting with that very able Irishman was at the Irish Convention in 1917.

But beyond all manner of doubt, I was temperamentally inclined to the policy of conciliation and co-operation. I knew the personal value of the landlord and professional class as citizens, and I realized that my generation, and still more those ten years younger than me, growing up after the landlord power had ceased to exist, had at least no desire to perpetuate the idea of a garrison or Protestant ascendancy. Like everybody else who came near him, I knew that Horace Plunkett was devoted to the interests of Ireland as surely as any patriot that ever lived, and that he had a noble and illuminating conception of Ireland's possibilities. I knew (though we never discussed ultimate aims) that George Russell was as strongly nationalist as any of them all, and Russell's whole power was thrown into work with Plunkett and for Plunkett. Yet at the same time I could see that Plunkett's personality and methods put the Nationalist Party in great difficulties. He had won in 1895 the South Dublin seat which had formerly been a Nationalist's. In 1900 he was turned out of it by the Unionist Party because he was suspect to them: and his next step was to seek to win another Nationalist seat, the city of Galway. What one man could do to break up the solidarity of the political movement he might reasonably be accused of doing. The Unionist Party were always very eloquent about his virtues, but they consistently refused to provide him with a seat: while on the other hand Dillon would have said that, admitting the value of his work for Irish

interests, Nationalists could not surrender a constituency to him as a Unionist without setting aside the paramount national demand for Home Rule.

There was also the moral to be drawn from the fate of Mr. Wyndham. I happened to be in the House of Commons when he was arraigned by the Ulster Unionist members on the charge that with his connivance the Under Secretary Sir Antony MacDonnell had gone into conference with Lord Dunraven upon plans for devolution. Not easily would one forget that debate. I heard for the first time the rasping voice of Mr. William Moore, now Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, denouncing this "wretched, rotten, sickly policy of conciliation"; and I heard Mr. Wyndham's account of what had passed. I heard his frank, generous tribute to Sir Antony and his admission of the wholly exceptional position accorded to this official—"as a colleague rather than a subordinate." But I had the feeling then, and have it now, that the House of Commons did not get the whole truth. Such carelessness, such levity as the Chief Secretary attributed to himself, in a post where his enthusiasms were so strongly engaged, was wholly unbelievable: but the House had no choice but to accept this very charming figure as a scapegoat. He went out of office and Mr. Long came in in his stead.

It was expected that Sir Antony's disappearance would follow: logically, it should have. But Sir Antony did not choose to make matters easy for the Government. He did not resign. Knowing the man, I am certain that had he exceeded the limits of what he considered himself entitled to do, he would have gone with his chief: and his refusal to resign is the strongest commentary on Mr. Wyndham's speech. It was intended that he should go: and Mr. Long intimated to Lord Dudley, then Lord Lieutenant, that he would one day be asking him to sign a letter dismissing the Union Secretary. Lord Dudley answered (it is said) that he knew his duty and would sign the document if it was brought to him by the Chief Secretary as member of

the Cabinet : but that he would take the mail boat to Holyhead that same evening with his own resignation of the Lord Lieutenancy in his pocket. So Sir Antony was never dismissed.

All this made an end of the attempt to create a middle party : and the Balfour administration turned to the project of weakening Irish nationalism by reducing the number of Ireland's representatives. This was defeated in Parliament by a skilful use of technical procedure, which added greatly to Redmond's prestige. (The credit of suggesting the device is said to belong to my friend, the late Swift MacNeill.) But Mr. Balfour did not easily abandon a project and in 1905 there was a proposal to muster on one platform all the various Irish elements which were prepared to resist this. Roger Casement urged on me that the Nationalist leaders should combine in this way with Lord Dunraven and a group from which a good deal was then hoped—the "Independent Orangemen" headed by Mr. Sloan : Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Healy, then dissidents, being ready to co-operate.

Dillon's view was, first, that if Mr. Sloan and Lord Dunraven identified themselves publicly with Redmond's party, it would weaken whatever influence these men could exercise through their own camps, while it would probably disrupt the main Nationalist body. Friendly co-operation at arms' length, with full recognition of essential differences, was the only policy to pursue. He admitted that the public constitutional movement had lost its hold on the enthusiasm of the younger men of the country "through the Parnellite split and all that followed it" ; but he was far from thinking that this could be regained by putting the Nationalist leaders on a platform with men who were at the most disposed to contemplate some move towards self-government. That, in his opinion, would have the contrary effect.

I did not guess then, nor did he, that Casement was to be ranked with the most extreme Nationalists : but I could see even then that this Protestant Ulsterman cherished

the hope of reviving in Ulster something of that spirit which made it the focus of the United Irishmen movement in Wolfe Tone's day.

I also was very curious to know what lay behind this Independent Orange movement, and a chance offered. It was announced that Captain John Shawe Taylor was going to Belfast to address an audience of Mr. Sloan's supporters. I wrote to Shawe Taylor asking if he would like me to accompany him, and he accepted the proposal effusively.

Shawe Taylor was a young county Galway squire, who had been in the army and married a lady with some money, and came back to live in his native county. The idea of a Land Conference was first publicly proposed by him and only his assiduous energy brought it together. Nothing put him off. Redmond told me later that, when refused an interview, he sat for a day in the hall waiting, like the most importunate of widows.

We met at Amiens Street and I found a handsome young country gentleman but with an odd suggestion of the leading man in a travelling company about his being. And there was much of the play actor in him.

In the train he produced a draft of his speech which shocked me by its incoherence. He was quite ready to make alterations, but, "After all," said he, "what matter what you say, so long as you please them?" I thought to myself how those hard-headed northerners would despise a string of what we call *raimés*. Sloan met us at the station, a little Belfast cockney whose reputation had been made by Protestant oratory at the Customs House steps—Belfast's equivalent for the spouter's Sunday Corner in Hyde Park. He turned down at once the proposal that I should speak. "You're a Home Ruler," said he; "it will be hard enough to get a hearing for the Captain." So when evening came I was part of the audience, several hundred of them, Belfast artisans of the roughest type. Sloan came out on the platform with Shawe Taylor, introduced him, and then said:

"If you think the way they express themselves rather rough, don't mind, it's the way we have up here." After this exhortation not to nail his ears to the pump, he stepped down, leaving the Galway man alone on the platform.

Shawe Taylor was in evening dress, very incongruous, I thought; but he had known better. Evidently there was a friendly feeling towards this handsome young stranger who dressed himself as if he were going to speak to a Mayfair audience. Then he started, and in the old expression, first he buttered them up and then he slithered them down: and they took it greedily. He spoke his speech like an actor; but it was very evident that he wanted a prompter—until finally, in the middle of a purple patch, he fairly broke down, stopped dead—and then laughed engagingly, pulled out his manuscript from his tail pocket, laughed again and they with him, refreshed his memory and went on again. After that, he had them: he was cheered and cheered, and if anyone had proposed chairing him to his hotel it would have been done with enthusiasm. As it was, he came out through the crowd, laughing and smiling and distributing shake-hands, limp with the excitement of playing his part. One man near me expressed it: "Thon's a smart fella: an' when he puts on thon smile o'his, min' you, it's vara takin'."

Nobody could have blarneyed an audience in Munster, Leinster or Connaught: there is too much cynicism and too many know the trick. But it was one of the most surprising personal triumphs I ever assisted at, and I said so in a signed article which the *Northern Whig* let me write. I called it "Daniel in the lions' den." Not so long after I heard a good deal more of that article: for Shawe Taylor was my opponent when I came to be run for Parliament.

I most certainly should not have got along so well with that audience. For one thing I should not have taken their eye, as he did; but for another I should certainly not have told that I would gladly shoulder a rifle and march by their side if anyone denied them their rights: for I knew very



T. F. Geoghegan, Dublin.

CAPTAIN JOHN SHAWE TAYLOR.

BY SIR WILLIAM ORPEN.

From the original in the Municipal Art Gallery, Dublin.

well that Protestant Ulster's conception of its own rights would not be easily made to fit with the rights of other Irishmen.

However, my opinion is very clear that nothing I ever did, in a long period of trying to serve Ireland, was so useful as the service Shawe Taylor rendered when he brought the Land Conference into being ; and I never tried to minimize that good deed when we were pitted against each other in a rather turbulent affair.

The 1906 Parliament had been several months sitting when a vacancy occurred for Galway City and I got a letter from a leading citizen—again a priest—asking if I would stand. This was Father Peter Dooley, then a great name in Galway—and deservedly, for he was a most beneficent person. He had started there a boy's club ; he had started a loan bank : he had started a woollen factory which grew into a solid enterprise and is there to this day : he was a shepherd of his people but he was also a very keen politician.

This time I did not attend the Convention and waited in Dublin till a wire came saying that I had been selected : then I took the train, which gets in about nine. There was a friendly group on the platform to greet me, but as I entered the hotel outside which the crowd was gathered to hear my address, all the lights in the town went out. In the innocence of my heart, I thought this was merely an unfortunate coincidence, for I did not know how electioneering was run in Galway. Also, my bedroom was No. 13 : I wonder now if that also was arranged. But what with the confusion and the hubbub and the mob of inebriated supporters trying to slap me on the back (and I never got as tolerant of drunken enthusiasm as was desirable for an Irish politician) I found myself with no kind of speech in my mind and made a very bad impression. But with all the fair play in the world I should not have made a good one. A man whose natural medium of expression is writing may learn to state an argument competently on his feet : he may even under some impulse of strong feeling, put that feeling

into contagious words—and then perhaps from the response of a crowd, may catch something of the natural speaker's quality ; but unless he has something definite that he wants to say, the presence of a crowd, which is the stimulus of opportunity to an orator, is probably to him an inhibition : nothing comes. Such at any rate has been the experience of the literary man about whom I know most.

There were, I think, three days to wait before the nomination—which in an ordinary Nationalist constituency would have ended the matter. But Galway was an exception. It was the one naturally Nationalist constituency which since 1880 had made a *faux pas*. It had returned a Unionist in 1900. For this, there were great excuses to be made. Small constituencies, as every student of politics knows, are much more amenable to personal influences than big ones, and it was, I think, a great feat when T. P. O'Connor first won Galway for what then ranked as extreme nationalism. Many of the men whom I knew had been as keen and ardent as Ireland could show. But in 1887 Parnell forced Captain O'Shea on the city, a man who was not even taking the party pledge ; and his return was secured for reasons which were no secret. It was a cynical transaction, carried out by the man most identified with the ideals of Ireland : little wonder that Galway ceased to be idealist : and the family which persuaded it to depart from the strict path of nationalism held extraordinary cards. Michael Morris, afterwards Lord Killanin, was among my father's friends in Trinity, and he developed into one of the ablest of Irish lawyers—one of the group who really governed Ireland from 1880 onwards. The great seal of Ireland was in his house when I stayed there in 1899, for he was then the acting Lord Justice. He was a Galwayman who lived all of his spare time at the big house he built himself on Galway Bay ; and the beautiful church there was of his building for he and his were devout and bountiful Catholics : he would talk to the people of town or country in English or Irish like one of themselves : and his son, the present Lord

Killanin took after him in ability and also in his love for the place. It was not easy to defeat such a candidate as Martin Morris when he stood for Galway: and his supporters were so enthusiastic that fifteen public-houses kept their doors open in his interest, with free drink for all his adherents. When he was returned the Nationalist Party prepared to contest the election; but the counsel whom they employed reported that the evidence of irregular practices was so abundant that to produce it would certainly lead to disfranchisement of the constituency. It was decided, therefore, to let the matter stand and organize to win it on the next occasion. They never had to fight the seat, as Martin Morris on his father's death succeeded to the title, and a candidate was found in Mr. Devlin, a Canadian politician on whom Galway staked its perennial hopes of becoming the terminus for a trans-Atlantic service.

But a notable result followed from the Morris election. Everybody in Galway was convinced that the election laws did not run in that city: and that the occasion of a contest was an occasion for free drinks. There was good encouragement for any enterprising man to assail the seat—since such an assailant could afford to take unusual risks. As a matter of course, everybody in Galway was dying to see a contest. In the days of the Parnellite split, the old tradition of a spirited hand to hand struggle had been revived. A man was killed on the occasion when Horace Plunkett stood.

For the moment, however, it looked as if the town would be disappointed. The candidates who had been set aside for me accepted the decision with perfect good humour, though one of them had done real service to the national movement, and dozens of men less fit than he had become Irish members. He was, however, far more properly in his place and far more useful as a member of the County Council: and I think he knew it. He had also the rare quality of knowing exactly his own motives. Martin McDonogh—who had been one of his supporters in the Convention—asked him afterwards: "What did you want

with Parliament at all?" And he answered: "Wouldn't it be a fine thing, Martin, for a poor man like me to see the policeman stopping the traffic for him at Westminster Corner?" Not many would have been so frank, or seen so clear into themselves: and very few would have taken it so good humouredly to be set aside for an unknown stranger. For from the moment I was chosen this man was my steady and active backer.

Martin McDonogh was not at this time taking any active part in public life though he was a member of all the public boards. Later, I persuaded him to become Chairman of the Urban District Council—probably the best service I ever did to Galway. But he was in all ways the biggest thing in the town: the kind of man who in America would have certainly been a millionaire and even in Galway has become a really important manufacturer and merchant. Ten Martin McDonoghs would give us a different Ireland.

I think one of the reasons he opposed the choice of me (though the first was certainly his strong personal friendship for the other man) was that he thought Father Dooley had too big a say in everything. These two, priest and layman, were the chiefs of the place, and they held each other at arms' length. Though each of them was prepared to admit the other's merit, neither was enthusiastic about it.

When I came to see Father Dooley, I found him furious because a chill had laid him up in his room at the big bare building, where half a dozen of the clergy lived together. He hated not to be able to do things—but his emissaries were busy—and honest men they were. Father Dooley was, politically, a boss: but he was surrounded by frank, honest men: and for the type of clergyman, Catholic or Protestant, whose whole mind is set on the welfare of his flock, to keep them sober, keep them decent and keep them prosperous, I do not know where a better should have been found. He had enough energy to drive a mill, and he would have earned respect among a community of Belfast Orangemen.

I am setting this down because I do not want to give

the impression that life west of the Shannon is merely extravaganza. But once you get into electioneering west of the Shannon, you realize that Charles Lever and the authors of the *Irish R.M.* or George Birmingham are not simply writers of fiction. They depict.

There was, for example, my friend Harry Murphy, who became my election agent when one was necessary. I can describe him in two ways. First—if you deduct from T. P. O'Connor the literary gift which has made him a great journalist (and perhaps also that element of idealism which in the last resort has always hampered T.P.'s career) the residue is very like my election agent: the same touch of western brogue, that no more than oils the wheels of persuasive speech, the same talent for arranging differences, the same resourceful cleverness, the same pleasant and slightly cynical humour. I have met very few cleverer men than this Galway solicitor. But if you had shut T.P. up within the limits of a Galway solicitor's practice, it is at least possible that T.P. also would have become what the West calls a playboy.—My second way of describing this personage is to recall George Birmingham's comedy, *Dr. Lucius O'Grady*: When Charles Hawtrey was playing it, Martin McDonogh came to me one day at the House of Commons, open-mouthed about it. "Did you see that play about Harry Murphy? Where did the fellow hear of him? Who told him about the ruffian?" ("Ruffian," in Martin McDonogh's mouth, was a term of endearment.) Nothing would persuade him but that the whole story of this dispensary doctor who invented a local hero and made a statue of him to be the pretext for a visit of the Lord Lieutenant was a pale reflection of some of Harry Murphy's achievements.

Yet there was one of them in which the humour of the situation worked out unexpectedly—and I soon heard about it. Sir James O'Donohoe had been often named as one of the rivals to my candidature, and it seemed to me well that I should call at once upon this rejected applicant

—of whom I knew nothing. His house was said to be near the quays. There, after inquiry, I brought up at the smallest kind of shop with nothing to be seen but a few ropes and candles on the counter, and behind the counter an elderly woman, as untidy as the shop. I was in doubt whether I should address her as Lady O'Donohoe, but refrained. She was the Knight's mother: and Sir James was out. When we met, he was a big, soft, good humoured bosthoon of a man—but shrewd. He had risen from a spade labourer, and, one way and another, had got on to the Urban District Council, and then into its Chairmanship. But the title—for that, in reality, Harry Murphy was responsible.

When in 1903, King Edward thought it good to visit his kingdom of Ireland, a considerable difficulty was created for the Nationalists. Nobody wanted to be uncivil: but the attitude taken up in Parnell's day was unchanged—that until self-government was granted to Ireland, no strict Irish Nationalist would do anything that could be taken as implying willing acceptance of the existing order. No Nationalist would go to the Vice-regal Lodge and *à fortiori* none could go to pay court to the King. At least, none could do so consistently: but the minds of several corporations were exercised as to whether a rigid consistency was not pedantic. Cork, for instance, took that view: and the leading powers in Cork stipulated that all police should be withdrawn from the streets and that the King should have a great day. He had it Galway also—where, as I have said, political virtue was not robust—had much to gain by standing well with the powers: its constant desire was to have a battleship stationed in the harbour (as happened almost continuously while Martin Morris was member) and Harry Murphy talked the Urban Council into doing as Cork did. It was his project, and the loyal address to be presented was of his drafting: and when the special train was due at the station he was there neatly and suitably attired; when there appeared the Chairman of the Council, arrayed in a top hat and dress clothes, who, taking the inscribed roll

from its bearer, thrust from him his encumbrance. "Hold my hat till I read the address to His Majesty."

And so he became Sir James.

There are stories in Lever very much like that: and I had—and have—a strong feeling about such bestowal of honours, which made the recipient ridiculous. This man was far too shrewd not to know it. He had, I think, counted that steps would be taken to prevent this. But in the end he took them himself, and most effectively. In 1906 I was back from France and attached for a while to the 10th Dublins—a battalion which General Hammond had formed wholly out of men above the labouring class. Here I found in charge of the quartermaster's store Corporal Sir James O'Donohoe, better satisfied with himself than I had ever known him—and giving satisfaction to others. Not long after, he became Lieutenant Sir James O'Donohoe in the Army Service Corps and there also as an officer in charge of forage, he did excellent work.

It will be seen that an election in Galway was likely to have comic elements. Nomination was on the Tuesday and on Sunday we had rumours of a contest: on the Monday it was announced that Shawe Taylor was to run a candidature and that he had a letter of support from Mr. William O'Brien.

So an election address had to be got out. I thought I could manage that, anyway, and wrote a few lines which seemed to cover the ground. But my committee looked disappointed. "Is that all?" they said. "What more do you want?" said I. "I've said I ask their votes, because I'm the chosen candidate of the United Irish League Convention, I have the support of the National Party, and I'm the grandson of Smith O'Brien who was sentenced to death in 1848." "But," said one, "we thought he was sentenced to be hanged and dhrrawn and quarrthered." "So he was," said I. "My God," said they, "and you leave out that." So it went in duly and "grandson of William Smith O'Brien," with this appendix, figured in capitals.

Three or four local members of Parliament were rushed down and holding of meetings began: and rows rose. The streets filled with "batyeen-boys" carrying sticks and shouting "Up Taylor," and "To Hell with Gwynn," or vice versa. There was a good deal of scrimmaging: our meetings were systematically interrupted, and worst of all, no band could be procured. It seemed that nothing could be done without a band and the other side had got one. There was a general air of dismay, much complaint of "blackguardism," and recognition of the other side's tactics—which were simply to frighten quiet people away from the poll. One afternoon as I was driving through the town with Murphy we were held up at a narrow corner and some drunken fellow ran out and hit me on the back. With the utmost promptitude Murphy stood up, turned in his seat and gave the staggering creature his whip lash full round the neck and face—and then went on, as if it was the most ordinary civility. A little further, as we drove on, three or four carloads of the batyeen boys (as the stick bearers were called), came galloping behind us with much shouting: and a turn of the street brought us to a place where the pavement was ripped up. Murphy slacked up to creep past it, regretfully, "If I'd only known the hole was there," he said, "I'd have come round hell for leather, and turned up that court. Then those boys would have been into it, on top of one another."

In the middle of these amenities, Dillon came down to take charge: and he did take charge. I never knew an atmosphere change so quickly.

My wife also arrived, bringing my eldest son, then a boy of fifteen. He, anyhow, got value out of it, for things kept happening. On the Thursday, which is market day in Galway, we proposed to hold a big meeting at the top of the square just opposite the County Club, which was the opposition headquarters: and we stood waiting on the steps of the hotel at the lower side. Two bands had been raised—one from the Boys' Industrial School, another from somewhere

in the country. These latter were standing outside a door when suddenly a pack from the top of the square charged down with an onslaught and began to carry off the instruments of music. We had no available force to throw in (a great lack of foresight, as my extended experience recognizes); but the brake in which the boys were drove vehemently at the *mêlée*. The only grown man in it was an old lay brother, most vigorously political and he from his seat beside the driver was inciting a kind of Boadicea charge. But the head of the order, a lame monk, lame as he was, caught up the brake, hauled himself in and stopped the forlorn hope. The instruments vanished and nothing was left but some broken heads and bloody noses. Our party advanced then on foot, Dillon in the rear, while on each side ran boys and raging females, shouting threats and curses and throwing from time to time Galway's special missile—a rotten herring. We got a brake into position in the middle of a big crowd, on the skirts of which free fights proceeded: and one man after another tried to be heard and could not. In the middle of it all, up came an outside car with Shawe Taylor on it and drove through our mob to the Club. Many people were scandalized at what they thought a provocative action; for my own part, I considered it very fitting in a candidate who was out to prove himself the traditional "man for Galway." He made a gay, handsome figure coming through that angry mob, cheerily waving his hand in reply to threats.

There were a lot of police about and they were very active with their batons. It was considered that they selected for their special rigour one section of our following, the countrymen: for the borough of Galway extended into Irish-speaking country east and west, and these people had all come in for the market, and the cut-away frieze coats which they wore gave them practically a uniform. Who ever did it, these Castlegar men suffered heavily, and they were not the meekest of Christians.

Dillon was convinced that the police had not played fair and sent off furious telegrams to the Chief Secretary and

Sir Antony MacDonnell. Parliament was in session, at a dull period; nothing else happened to be happening and special correspondents descended on us in swarms.

That evening I was told that the Inspector of Police wanted to see me, and I found a gentleman come with the proposal that we should call off all further meetings in the interests of peace. I was inclined to damn his impudence but wisely referred him to Dillon, who, to my amazement, listened serenely and said that he thought it would be an excellent idea. The Inspector, effusive in acknowledgments, was about to go when Dillon, looking like a seraph in a stained glass window, added, "Of course, you have ascertained that the other side will do as we do in this matter." There was a very awkward pause: the Inspector hummed, and boggled, and finally admitted that Shawe Taylor had refused to enter into any such arrangement. "It would have been well to mention that earlier," said Dillon; "but I hope you will take note of the fact that we are not responsible for anything that may happen when our meetings continue, as they must." Then he turned to me when a confused policeman had disappeared. "Are you still of opinion that we shall ever get fair play from the police?"

I had received another visit which had surprised me—from the Adjutant of the Connaught Rangers who came down to say that at the regimental depot were a certain number of married men having votes and that Shawe Taylor had been permitted to address them and I should have the same opportunity. I thanked him, but made up my mind it would be silly to waste time. My opponent was a British officer and they were British troops. However, Harry Murphy insisted, we drove out and were received by the adjutant who took us into the mess for drinks while the men were being mustered. Then came in the Commanding Officer, and amazed me by asking if I had any objection to his being present. I said I had no right to object, but that I should feel honoured. Then to my still further amazement he asked if he might bring his wife and her sister.

This seemed to border on the farcical, and I, being convinced that I should not get a vote in the place, determined to amuse myself by seeing how far one could go. The ladies came, I was presented; and then it appeared that they were curious to attend one of our meetings in the town but were a little afraid of being in the streets. So I said my wife would be glad to take charge of them; and then we went in to the gymnasium where were about thirty soldiers drawn up. I told them that I thought highly of Irish soldiers and had a brother serving; but that from my point of view the rule of Ireland by England was wrong and only existed by armed force: and that while this was so, I considered that no Irish nationalist should go into the British army and that I should do what I could to stop recruiting. I was saying this quietly, for the Colonel was an Englishman and I knew that the English regard as moderate any utterances made by a man who keeps his hands in his pockets and does not raise his voice. Still, I wondered when he would stop me for treasonable discourse. Having tried it on sufficiently for my satisfaction I stopped and asked if he had any objection to my speaking in Irish, and he agreed. About a dozen men had Gaelic and I made them a patriotic address in such sentiments as my vocabulary could express—and so finished. We moved out and as we went the men cheered—I thought out of courtesy. But the Colonel said to me, “They didn’t do that for Shawe Taylor”: and when we got out into the barrack square the recruits took it up and Murphy and I drove away in the middle of plaudits—much surprised men. On the polling day, the sergeant-major came up to me, saluted and said, “Twenty-eight voted, sir, and I’m sorry to say there’s three of them gone wrong. Some of the rest were a little bothered by what you said about recruiting but I explained it to them.” I wonder how he did explain. As to the Colonel and his ladies, that night, while I was at dinner, in came a message to say they were in the hall and my wife established them with herself overhead at a window where they had a good experience of Dillon’s impassioned

periods—and came back for more the next night. Finally, when it came to counting of votes, I told my wife she had better stay in, as there might be trouble coming away: but when I got to the courthouse, there were the two Englishwomen in a corner: and on the declaration of the result, the Colonel's lady was the first person to shake me by the hand.

That was the beginning of my acquaintance with the Rangers—and of my affection for them. But heaven knows that in 1906 I was far enough from guessing that I should be in 1916 prouder of my company in that regiment than of any earthly thing.

The polling day was a fitting close to this comic saga. About 200 police were brought in and I spent my time mostly about the courthouse where were the polling booths. There was no small sensation when a body in military formation was seen coming along the road from Castlegar. At the head of it was the kind, gentle old priest, whom I had come to know: but bringing up the rear was the organizer of this demonstration, a young curate, furiously a Gaelic Leaguer and a great despiser of parliamentary politics; but he had seen his people beaten on the Thursday and was determined that they should not suffer any further indignities. Outside the polling booth the column halted and a large force of police took up a position facing them. It had been settled that the whole body should wait till the last man had voted—and that meant a long delay, especially as many were illiterate and not a few only spoke Irish.

It was an extraordinary muster and Shawe Taylor who came up congratulated me on them. I was busy trying to hurry them through, for it was a cold day to stand about—and there was always the risk of battle. Suddenly, I heard a cheer and an order sharply given and dashed out to find the police drawing their batons and the Castlegar men with all their sticks in the air. The sub-Inspector and I got rapidly between the forces—and found everybody roaring with laughter. It was my son's palaver. He, being already

a keen Irish scholar, had gone up and down parleying with them, and, having his camera, tried to get snapshots. Then said one of them: "Wait till you get us right;" and the order went round to line up, and at a signal, there was this wild western yell and sticks brandished—and the police, not unnaturally, thought a charge was coming.

That passed over: time went on; there were many entreaties to be allowed to go away and get a drink—and presently the curate reported to me that half a dozen had slipped off by a lane and I had better go and look after them. As I rounded the corner into the broad street which leads to the courthouse, there they were in full cry like hounds, and one of the town batyeen boys running for his life before them. He turned sharp into a Catholic church to the left, and I thought that would end it, but they pinned him on the steps and were like terriers on a rat. An old lay brother and I dashed in, and tearing them away one by one from the struggling mass, we came at last to the fugitive—and a woman with her knees straddled across his head: I admired the local experience which taught her so exactly how to prevent any serious damage. By this time the police had come up and were trying to hustle back the Castlegar boys to their fellows: they were not willing to go, for they had not wasted their time when they reached a public—and the old monk and I had to hustle them too. Finally I caught one young fellow by the throat, he protesting vehemently that he would do anything in the world for me and would obey me as if I were the priest—when a policeman came in reach and with his free hand he struck a blow of the stick at him. But we got them back to their places: I went back, swept in a couple more (who had been merely drinking) and then, pleased and proud, had one more look round and saw another of the frieze coats leisurely taking a devious course down the middle of the street. "Did you vote yet?" said I in Irish. "I did not." "Come in then and give your vote now." He was indisposed to be hurried, but I dragged him protesting to the polling booth, shoved him inside and

looked about with conscious virtue. But there was no approbation. "What were you doing with *him*," said they. "Sure, that's a bailiff. He'll vote against you."

We got in by nearly two to one: Shawe Taylor said very friendly things. How it happened that this young, strong man died only a couple of years later I do not know; but he was a real loss to Ireland, and a better man to run a Galway election never walked. On the Sunday which followed the polling day I saw more sticking plaster displayed than in any community of which I have had experience.

The first time I approached the House of Commons by the Members' entrance from Palace Yard, constables stopped me. I explained that I was a new member. They looked me up and down with interest. "You're the gentleman they've been using all the sticks and stones about," said they.

I have to confess that these turbulent proceedings amused me. Apparently it was not to be expected that they should. In George Birmingham's book, the well-bred young man, finding that his position as a Nationalist politician threatens to bring him into collision with the police, sends in his resignation. Also, I found during the first days of our Galway election the old hands looking at me apprehensively; and I gathered from them afterwards that they were waiting for the moment when I should turn away in disgust and say that this was no work for a man of letters. Perhaps they were right. Later on, I had ample acquaintance with disgust. But at this first encounter I felt myself to be pleasantly diversifying the experiences of a literary man.

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